1057

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS,

OF

SANTILLANE.

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH OF LE SAGE,

BY

T. SMOLLETT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

WITH ELEGANT ENGRAVINGS.

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MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S ... MAHAL

1857

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THE

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OF

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OF

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BOOK IV.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STRATAGEMS PRACTISED BY AURORA TO CAPTIVATE DON LEWIS DE PACHECO.

The two new friends meeting next morning, began the day with embraces, which Aurora was obliged to give and receive, in order to act the part of Don Felix. They went out to walk, and I accompanied them with Chilindron, the valet of Don Lewis; when stopping at the university, to look at the titles of books that were pasted on the gate, which a great many people amused themselves in reading, I perceived a little man among them, who gave his opinion of all the different works that were so published. I observed that he was heard with great attention, which I fancied at the same time he believed was no more than his

due: for he seemed vain and positive, as little men commonly are. "That new translation of Horace," said he, "which you see advertised in such large characters, is a work in prose, composed by an old college-author; a book in great esteem among the students, who have already consumed four editions of it; and yet there is not one man of taste who has purchased so much as a single copy." His judgment was not a whit more favourable towards the other books, which he ridiculed without exception; so that, in all likelihood, he was an author himself. I should not have been tired of hearing him to an end, but was obliged to follow Don Lewis and Don Felix, who, being as little pleased with his discourse, as interested in the books which he censured, left him to the enjoyment of his own criticism.

We came home at dinner-time; and my mistress sitting down at table with Pacheco, artfully turned the conversation on her own family. "My father," said she, "is a cadet of the house of Mendoza, and settled at Toledo: my mother is sister to Donna Ximena de Guzman, who came to Salamanca some days ago, on an affair of importance, with her niece Aurora, the only daughter of Don Vincent de Guzman, who, perhaps, you know." "No," replied Don Lewis, "but I have often heard of him, as well as of your cousin Aurora. Am I to believe what is reported of her? I am assured that nothing equals her understanding but her beauty." "As for understanding," resumed

Don Felix, "she has a pretty good share, and that well cultivated: but I do not think her so very handsome. People say that she and I very much resemble one another." "If that be the case," cried Pacheco, "she deserves the reputation she has got." "Your features are regular; your cousin must be quite enchanting. I wish I had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with her." "I undertake to satisfy your curiosity," replied the pretended Mendoza, "and will carry you to my aunt's house this very afternoon." My mistress all of a sudden changed the discourse, and talked on indifferent subjects. After dinner, while they were preparing to go and visit Donna Ximena, I was beforehand with them, and ran to advertise the duenna, that she might be ready to receive them; then, returning instantly, accompanied Don Felix, who conducted Don Lewis to the house of his aunt. But they had scarce entered the house, when they met Dame Ximena, who desired them by a sign to make no noise. "Hush! hush!" said she, with a low voice, "you will wake my niece, who has been tormented since yesterday with a terrible head-ach, which has just left her, and the poor child has been asleep about a quarter of an hour." "I am sorry for this disappointment," said Mendoza! "I was in good hopes of seeing my cousin, and had promised that pleasure to my friend Pacheco." "The affair is not very urgent," replied Ortiz, smiling: "you may defer it till to-morrow." The cavaliers conversed a little

while with the old gentlewoman, and then retired.

Don Lewis carried us to the house of one of his friends, a gentleman whose name was Don Gabriel de Pedros, with whom he spent the rest of the day, supped, and did not think of coming home till two o'clock in the morning. We had got about half way, when we stumbled over two men lying stretched upon the ground. Thinking they were unfortunate people who had been assassinated, we stopped to give them assistance, provided it was not too late; and as we endeavoured to inform ourselves of their condition, as well as the darkness of the night would allow, the patrole came up, and the commander, taking us at first for the murderers, ordered his men to surround us; but he conceived a more favourable opinion of our morals, when he heard us speak, and, by the help of a dark lantern, saw the faces of Mendoza and Pacheco. His soldiers being ordered to examine the condition of the two men, whom he fancied had been slain, found that it was a fat licentiate and his man, both in liquor, or rather deep drunk. "Gentlemen," cried one of the guard, "I know this epicure;" it is Signior the Licentiate Guyomar, rector of our university. Notwithstanding the pickle you see him in now, he is a great man, a wonderful genius! There is not a philosopher in Salamanca whom he cannot confute in an argument. He has an unparalleled flow of words: 'tis pity that he is a little addicted to law-suits, the

bottle, and a wench. He was, no doubt, on his return from supping with his Isabella, where unluckily his man getting as drunk as himself, they have both tumbled into the kennel. Before the good licentiate was rector, this misfortune frequently happened to him; and, you see, honors do not always change the man." We left those drunkards in the hands of the patrole, who undertook to carry them home, and, returning to our lodging, every one went to rest.

Don Felix and Don Lewis getting up about noon, Aurora was the first subject of their discourse. "Gil Blas," said my mistress to me, "go to my aunt, Donna Ximena, and ask if Signior Pacheco and I can have the pleasure of seeing my cousin to-day." I went out to acquit myself of this commission, or rather, to concert with the duenna what was to be done: and when we had taken our measures, I returned to the false Mendoza, saying, "Signior, your cousin Aurora is surprisingly well, and charged me to assure you from her, that your visit will be very agreeable: and Donna Ximena bid me assure Signior Pacheo, that he shall always be welcome at her house, on your account."

I perceived that Don Lewis was mightily pleased with these last words: my mistress observed the same, and drew a happy presage from her remark. Immediately before dinner, Signora Ximena's valet appeared, and said to Don Felix, "Signior, a man from Toledo has been enquiring for you at

your aunt's house, and left this note." The pretended Mendoza opened it, and read aloud these words: "If your are desirous of hearing news of "your father, and of being made acquainted "with other things of consequence to you, fail "not, on receipt of this, to repair to the Black-"Horse, near the university."—"I am," said he, "too curious to hear these things of consequence, not to satisfy my desire instantly. Without taking leave of you, Pacheco," added he, "if I do not return in two hours, you may go by yourself to my aunt's, and I will come to you there after dinner. You know what Gil Blas has told you from Donna Ximena, and you have a right to make the visit." So saying, he went out, and ordered me to follow him.

You may easily guess, that, instead of going to the Black-Horse, we took the road to the house where Ortiz lived, where, as soon as we arrived, Aurora took off her fair-coloured tour, washed and rubbed her eye-brows, dressed herself like a woman, and became a very handsome black-eyed lady, as she naturally was: for her disguise had changed her so much, that Aurora and Don Felix appeared to be two different people. She even seemed a great deal taller, as a woman, than as a man; to which, indeed, her shoe-heels, that were excessively high, contributed not a little. When she had improved her charms with all the assistance that art could bestow, she expected Don Lewis with an agitation composed of hope and fear.

Sometimes she confided in her beauty and wit, and sometimes was afraid that her attempt would be unsuccessful. Ortiz, on the other side, summoned all her finesse to second my mistress; and I, that Pacheco might not see me in the house, like those players who appear only in the last act, concealed myself till towards the end of the visit, by going out as soon as I had dined.

In short, every thing was in order when Don Lewis arrived. He was received in a very agreeable manner by lady Ximena, and enjoyed a conversation with Aurora two or three hours long; at the end of which I came into the room where they were, and addressing myself to the cavalier, "Signior," said I, "my master, Don Felix, cannot be here to-day; but begs you will excuse him, because he is in company with three men from Toledo, of whom he cannot disengage himself." "Ah, the little rake," cried Donna Ximena, "he is certainly set in to hard drinking." "No! madam," I replied, "they are discoursing together of very serious affairs. He is heartily sorry that he cannot wait upon you, and ordered me to make his apology to you and Donna Aurora." "Oh! I'll have none of his apologies," said my mistress: "he knows I have been indisposed, and ought to show a little more concern for his relation. In order to punish him for his indifference, he shall not see me these fifteen days." "Ah, madam," said Don Lewis, "do not form such a cruel

resolution. Don Felix is rather to be pitied for not being able to visit you."

They diverted themselves for some time with this subject, and then Pacheco withdrew. The fair Aurora immediately transformed herself, and resuming the appearance of a cavalier, returned to her lodgings as soon as she could. "I ask pardon, my dear friend," said she to Don Lewis, "for failing to meet you at my aunt's, but I could not get rid of the people in whose company I was. What consoles me for the disappointment is, that you have at least had leisure to satisfy your curiosity. "Well, what do you think of my cousin?" "I am enchanted with her?" answered Pacheco. "You had reason to say she resembled you: I never saw features more alike: the same turn of face, the same eyes, the same mouth, and tone of voice! There is, however, some difference between you. Aurora is a little taller than you: she is black, and you are fair: you are merry, and she is grave. These are what distinguish the one from the other. As for understanding," added he, "I do not believe a celestial being can have more than your cousin. In a word, she is a lady of accomplished merit."

Signior Pacheco pronounced these last words with so much vivacity, that Don Felix said, smiling, "Friend, I advise you, for the sake of your repose to go no more to Donna Ximena's. Aurora de Guzman may make your heart ach, and

inspire you with a passion." "There is no occasion for another sight of her to make me in love," said he, interrupting him; "that is done already." "I am sorry for it," replied the pretended Mendoza; "for you are not one of those who can attach themselves to one, and my cousin is no Isabella. I can assure you before-hand, that she will never listen to a lover except on honourable terms." "Honourable terms!" replied Don Lewis. "Sure nobody would offer any other to a young lady of her birth. Alas! I should think myself the happiest of men, if she would approve of my addresses, and consent to join her destiny with mine."

"Since you talk in that stile," said Don Felix, "I am interested in your behalf. Yes, I list myself in your service; offer you all my influence with Aurora; and will to-morrow bring over my aunt, who has a great sway over her." Pacheco returned a thousand thanks to the cavalier who made him such fair promises; and we perceived, with joy, that our stratagem could not succeed better. Next day, we increased the love of Don Lewis, by a new invention. My mistress having been with Donna Ximena on pretence to render her favourable to that cavalier, came back, and said to him, "I have spoke to my aunt, whom with much difficulty I have made your friend. She was furiously prejudiced against you; for somebody or other had made her believe that you was a downright libertine: but I undertook your defence with

eagerness, and at last destroyed the bad impression she had received of your morals.

"This is not all," pursued Aurora. "You must talk with my aunt, in my presence, and then we shall make sure of her assistance." Pacheco expressed extreme impatience to discourse with Donna Ximena, and that satisfaction was granted to him next morning, when the false Mendoza conducted him to Madam Ortiz, and they three had a long conversation, in which Don Lewis shewed that he had allowed himself to be very much captivated in a very little time. The artful Ximena feigned to be moved with all the tenderness he expressed, and promised her utmost endeavours to engage her niece to marry him. Pacheco immediately threw himself at the feet of such a kind aunt, and thanked her for her friendship? whereupon Don Felix asked if his cousin was up? "No," answered the duenna; "she is still a-bed, and you cannot see her at present; but return this afternoon, and you may converse with her at leisure." This answer of Madam Ximena redoubled (as you may well believe) the joy of Don Lewis, who thought the rest of the forenoon extremely tedious, and went back to his lodgings with Mendoza, who was not a little pleased with observing in him all the marks of genuine love.

They talked of nothing but Aurora; and when they had dined, Don Felix said to Pacheco, "There is a thought come into my head. I am of opinion, that I should go to my aunt's some

minutes before you, and have a little chat with my cousin, that I may, if possible, discover the disposition of her heart towards you." Don Lewis, approving this scheme, let his friend go before, and did not set out till an hour after. So, my mistress made such good use of her time, that she was dressed like a lady when her lover arrived. "I thought," said the cavalier, after having saluted Aurora and the duenna, "to have found Don Felix here." "You will see him immediately," answered Donna Ximena, "he is writing in my closet." Upon which, Pacheco seemed to swallow the trick, and entered into conversation with the ladies. But, notwithstanding the presence of the beloved object, he perceived that the hours stole away, without Mendoza's appearing; and, as he could not help testifying some surprise at it, Aurora, changing countenance all of a sudden, began to laugh, and said to Don Lewis, "Is it possible that you have no suspicion of the trick which has been played upon you? Do an artificial light-coloured tour, and painted eye-brows, make me so unlike myself, that you have been mistaken by them hitherto? Undeceive yourself then, Pacheco," continued she, resuming an air of gravity, "and know that Don Felix de Mendoza and Aurora de Guzman are but one and the same person."

She was not contented with extricating him out of his error, but also owned her passion for him, and informed him of all the steps she had taken towards its success. Don Lewis, no less charmed

than surprised with what he heard, threw himself at her feet, exclaiming in a transport of joy, " Ah, beautiful Aurora! may I then believe myself the happy mortal whom you have favoured so much? How shall I recompense your goodness, which the most perfect love can never enough repay?" These words were accompanied with a thousand more passionate expressions; after which, the two lovers conferred upon the measures that were to be taken towards the accomplishment of their mutual desires; and it was resolved that we should set out immediately for Madrid, and bring our comedy to a conclusion by marriage. This design was no sooner formed than put in execution: in fifteen days, Don Lewis espoused my mistress, and their nuptials gave rise to entertainments and infinite rejoicings.

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J. Smith, sc. 1 Clements Inn. Strand

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CHAP. VII.

GIL BLAS QUITS HIS PLACE, AND GOES INTO THE SERVICE OF DON GONZALES DE PACHECO.

THREE weeks after this marriage, my mistress, being desirous of recompensing me for the service I had done her, made me a present of an hundred pistoles, saying, "Gil Blas, my friend, far from turning you away, I leave it to your choice to stay with me as long as you please; but my husband's uncle, Don Gonzales de Pacheco, wants to have you for a valet-de-chambre. I spoke to him so advantageously of you, that he assured me, I would do him a favour in parting with you to him. He is an old nobleman," added she, "of an excellent character, and you will be quite happy in his service."

I thanked Aurora for her generosity, and, as she had no longer any occasion for me, accepted the post to which I was recommended; the more willing, as I should still be in the family. One morning, therefore, I went with a message from my new-married mistress to Signior Don Gonzales, who was still a-bed, although it was near twelve o'clock. When I entered his chamber, I found him taking some broth, which the page had brought in. The old gentleman's whiskers were in papers, his eyes almost quite extinguished, and his face

pale and meagre. He was one of those old boys who have been great rakes in their youth, and are not a whit more sedate in their age. He received me with great civility, and told me, that if I would serve him with as much zeal as I had manifested for his niece, I might depend upon living happily. I promised to have the same attachment to him which I had for her, and that moment he engaged me in his service.

Behold me, then, with a new master, and heaven knows what sort of a man he was! When he got up, I fancied I saw the resurrection of Lazarus. Paint to your own imagination, a tall body, so lean and withered, that when it was naked, an anatomist might have taught osteology upon it; with legs so small that they looked like spindles, after he had put on three or four pair of stockings. This living mummy was besides troubled with an asthma, and coughed at every word he spoke. Having drank chocolate, he called for paper and ink, and wrote a letter, which he sealed, and sent away, according to the direction, by the page who had brought the broth; then turning to me, "Friend," said he, "thou art the person whom I intend henceforth to trust with my commissions, especially those which regard Donna Euphrasia, a young lady whom I love, and who is passionately fond of me."

"Good God!" said I to myself, "how can young people help believing themselves beloved, when this old dotard thinks himself adored!"

"Gil Blas," added he, "thou shalt go with me this very day to her house, where I sup almost every night, and thou wilt be charmed with her prudence and reserve. Far from resembling those silly coquettes, who can relish nothing but youth, and are won by appearances only, she has an understanding already mature and judicious, that consults the sentiments of a man, and prefers a lover of delicacy and taste, to one of the most shining exteriors." Signior Don Gonzales did not here finish the eulogium of his mistress, whom he represented as the epitome of all perfection. But he had a hearer not easily persuaded. After the conduct of the actresses, which I had seen, I did not look upon old noblemen as people very happy in their amours. I pretended, however, out of complaisance, to believe all that my master said. I did more, I extolled the discernment and taste of Euphrasia, and was even impudent enough to affirm, that she could not have a more amiable gallant.

The good old gentleman did not perceive that I had made game of him; but, on the contrary, applauded my good sense. So true it is, that a sycophant may run any risk with the great, who swallow all kinds of flattery, let it be ever so absurd. The old man having written his letter, pulled some hairs out of his beard with a pair of pincers, cleared his eyes of a thick gum that filled them, washed his ears and hands, and, after having performed his ablutions, painted his whisk-

ers, eye-brows, and hair, of a black colour; continuing longer at his toilet than an old widow, who studies to hide the outrages of time upon her. Just as he had done dressing, another gentleman in years, one of his friends, entered, whose name was the Count d'Asumar. But he, far from concealing his grey hairs, supported himself on a cane, and seemed to glory in his old age, rather than in appearing young. "Signior Pacheco," said he, as he came in, "I am come to dine with you." "You are very welcome, Count," answered my master. Mean while, having embraced one another, they sat down, and entered into conversation till such time as dinner was ready.

The discourse turned at first upon a bull-feast, which had been celebrated a few days before; and as they mentioned the cavaliers who had shown the greatest vigour and address, the old Count, like another Nestor, who, from talking of the present, always took occasion to praise the past, said, with a sigh, "Alas! I see no men now-a-day comparable to those I have known heretofore; and the tournaments are not performed with half the magnificence that they were when I was a young man." I laughed within myself at the prejudice of honest Signior d'Asumar, who did not confine it to tournaments only; but I remember, when the desert was set upon the table, seeing some fine peaches served up, he observed, "In my time the peaches were much larger than they are at present: nature degenerates every day." "At that rate," said

Don Gonzales, smiling, " the peaches of Adam's time must have been wonderfully large."

Count D'Asumar staid almost the whole day with my master, who no sooner found himself disengaged, than he went out, bidding me follow him. He went to Euphrasia's, who lodged at the distance of an hundred paces from our house, and found her in a very handsome apartment. She was gaily dressed, and had such a youthful air, that I concluded she was under age, although she was a good thirty years old at least. She was really handsome, and her understanding soon raised my admiration: for she was not one of those coquettes, who have nothing to recommend them but idle ribaldry and loose behaviour; she was modest in her manners, as well as in her conversation, and talked with a great deal of wit, without the least affectation. " O Heaven!" said I to myself, " is it possible that a person of such delicacy can be a lady of pleasure!" I imagined that impudence was inseparable from all women of her profession, and was astonished to see one with the appearance of modesty; not reflecting that these princesses know how to assume any shape, and accommodate themselves to the characters of the people of fortune and nobility that fall into their hands. When their gallants are pleased with fire and transport, they are brisk and petulant; and, with those who love reserve, practise a prudent and virtuous behaviour: they are the true came-

leons, who change colour according to the humour and disposition of the men whom they approach.

Don Gonzales was none of those noblemen who are taken with your bold beauties; he could not bear ladies of that class: on the contrary, he could relish no woman unless she had the appearance of a vestal. Euphrasia, therefore, modelled herself accordingly, and shewed that all the good actresses are not employed in the theatre. Leaving my master with his nymph, I went down stairs into an hall, where I found an old chambermaid, whom I had known a waiting-woman to an actress. Recollecting me immediately, she said, "What, is it you, Gil Blas? You have quitted Arsenia, it seems, as I did Constantia." "Yes, truly," answered I; "it is a long time since I left her, and went to serve a young lady of fashion. A player's life is not to my taste; and therefore I dismissed myself, without deigning to come to the least explanation with Arsenia." "You was in the right," replied the chambermaid, whose name was Beatrice: "I served Constantia pretty much in the same manner: one morning early I gave in my accounts very coldly, which she received without uttering one syllable, and so we parted cavalierly enough."

"I am extremely glad," said I, "that we now meet in a more honourable house. Donna Euphrasia seems to be a sort of woman of fashion, and I believe her character is very good." "You are not at all mistaken," said the old waiting-

woman: "she is of a very good family; and as for her temper, I can assure you, there never was one more equal and sweet. She is none of those passionate and difficult mistresses, who find fault with every thing, scold incessantly, torment their domestics, and, in one word, make a hell of their service. I never once heard her grumble; but when I happen to do any thing contrary to her inclination, she reproves me without rage; and never lets one of those epithets escape her, of which your violent dames are so liberal." "My master," I resumed, "is also very sweet tempered: he is the best-natured mortal alive: and therefore you and I are much more happy than when we were in the service of actresses." "A thousand times more happy!" replied Beatrice: instead of leading a life of noise and tumult, I now live, as it were, in a retreat. No man enters these doors but Signior Don Gonzales. I shall see nobody but you in my solitude, for which I am not at all sorry; for I have had an affection for you a long time, and, more than once, envied the happiness of Laura, in having you for a gallant. But, in short, I hope to be as happy as she; for, though I have neither youth nor beauty, by way of amends, I hate coquetry, and am faithful as a turtle."

As honest Beatrice was one of those persons who are obliged to make a tender of their favours, because nobody will ask them, I was not at all tempted to profit by her advances. I did not de-

sire, however, that she should perceive my contempt, and was even polite enough to express myself in such a manner, as that she did not lose all hopes of engaging my heart. I imagined, then, that I had made a conquest of an old chambermaid, but happened on this occasion to be deceived. She did not behave to me in this manner for my own sake only; her design was to inspire me with love, that she might bring me over to the interest of her mistress, for whom she was so zealous, that she did not mind what it cost her, in promoting her advantage. I found my error next morning, when I carried a billet-doux from my master to Euphrasia. That lady gave me a most gracious reception, and said a thousand obliging things, in which she was joined by her maid: one admiring my physiognomy, while the other observed in me an air of prudence and sagacity. According to them, Signior Don Gonzales, possessed a treasure, in having such a valet. In a word, they praised me so much, that I suspected their applause, and even discerned the motives of it; but I received it, in appearance, with all the simplicity of a fool, and by this counterplot effectually deceived the sharpers, who, at last, pulled off the mask.

"Hark ye, Gil Blas," said Euphrasia to me; "it depends upon thyself to make thy fortune. Let us act in concert, my friend. Don Gonzales is old, and his constitution so crazy, that the least touch of a fever, assisted by an able physician, will

carry him off. Let us make the best of the little time he has left, and exert ourselves so as that he may leave the best part of his estate to me. Thou shalt have a good share of the booty; and thou mayest depend upon my promise as much as if I had made it before all the notaries of Madrid." "Madam," answered I, "you may command your humble servant. You have nothing to do, but to prescribe my conduct, and you shall be satisfied." "Very well," she replied; "thou must observe thy master, and give me an account of all his proceedings. When you talk to him in private, do not fail to turn the conversation upon women, and from thence artfully take occasion to speak well of me. Ply him with Euphrasia as much as possible; and I again recommend it to you, to be very attentive to what passes in the family of Pacheco. If you perceive that any relation of Don Gonzales is extremely officious about him, and aims at the succession of his estate, acquaint me with it immediately. That is all I ask, and I warrant I shall send him a-drift in a very little time: for I know the different characters of his relations, and the ridiculous lights in which they may be represented to him; having already prejudiced him pretty successfully against all his nephews and cousins."

By these instructions, and others which Euphrasia added, I concluded, that this lady was one of those who attached themselves to generous old men. She had lately prevailed upon Don Gonza-

les to sell an estate, the price of which she had converted to her own use; she extorted from him valuable moveables every day; and, besides, had reason to hope, that she should not be forgotten in his will. I pretended to engage willingly to do all that she desired; and, dissimulation apart, doubted within myself, on my return home, whether I should contribute to impose on my master, or undertake to detach him from his mistress. The last of these resolutions seemed more honourable than the other, and I felt myself more inclined to fulfil than betray my duty. Besides, Euphrasia had made me no positive promise, and that, perhaps, was the occasion of my fidelity remaining uncorrupted. I resolved, therefore, to serve Don Gonzales with zeal, persuading myself, that if I should be lucky enough to divert his affection from his idol, I should be better rewarded for this good action, than for all the bad ones I could commit.

That I might the more easily accomplish what I proposed, I shewed myself entirely devoted to the service of Donna Euphrasia: I made her believe, that I spoke of her incessantly to my master; and accordingly invented fables, which she took for sterling truth. I insinuated myself so much into her good graces, that she thought me entirely in her interest; and still the better to impose upon her, affected to appear in love with Beatrice, who, ravished to see, at her age, a young lover at her back, did not much mind being

deceived, provided she was deceived agreeably. When my master and I were each with his own princess, we composed two very different pictures in the same taste. Don Gonzales, pale and withered as I have represented him, when he attempted to ogle, looked like a wretch in his last agonies; and my infanta, in proportion to the seeming increase of my passion, assumed still more and more childish airs, and practised all the artifices of an old coquette, which she had been learning forty years at least; having been refined in the service of some of those heroines of gallantry, who can please even in their old age, and die loaded with the spoils of two or three generations.

I was not satisfied with following my master, every evening, to the house of Euphrasia, I sometimes went thither alone by day; but at what hour soever I went in, I never met with any man, or woman either, of a suspicious appearance; nor could I discover the least trace of infidelity; a circumstance that surprised me not a little; for I could not imagine that such a handsome lady would be exactly true to Don Gonzales; and in this, surely, my judgment was not too rash; for the fair Euphrasia, (as you will presently see,) that she might wait with the more patience for my master's estate, was provided with a lover more agreeable to a woman of her age.

One morning, when I carried, as usual, a letter to the princess, I perceived, while I was in

her chamber, the feet of a man concealed behind the tapestry. I went away, without seeming to observe them; but, although I ought not to be surprised at this object, which was no business of mine, I did not fail to resent it. "Ah, perfidious wretch!" said I to myself, in a passion; "ah, wicked Euphrasia! thou art not satisfied with imposing upon a good old gentleman, by persuading him that he is beloved, but thou must also crown thy perfidy, by abandoning thyself to another!" What a fool was I, now I think on it, to moralize in this manner! I ought rather to have laughed at the adventure, and looked upon it as a compensation for the tiresome, languid moments she underwent in her commerce with my master. I should, at least, have done better in holding my tongue, than in seizing this occasion of acting the conscientious valet; but, instead of moderating my zeal, I entered warmly into the interest of Don Gonzales, to whom I made a faithful report of what I had seen: I even added, that Euphrasia wanted to seduce me; I concealed nothing of what she had said on that occasion; and it was his own fault, if he was not perfectly acquainted with the character of his mistress. He was confounded at the information; and a small emotion of wrath, that appeared on his countenance, seemed to presage that the lady should not be unfaithful to him with impunity. "Enough, Gil Blas," said he: "I am extremely sensible of thy attachment, and pleased with thy

fidelity. I will go instantly to Euphrasia, load her with reproaches, and break for ever with the ungrateful creature." So saying, he went out accordingly, and dispensed with my attendance, that he might spare me the disagreeable part I had to play during their eclaircissement.

I waited for my master's return with a world of impatience, not doubting that, as he had so much cause to complain of his nymph, he would come back altogether detached from her allurements. On this supposition, I applauded myself for what I had done; and represented to myself the satisfaction which the natural heirs of Don Gonzales would have, when they learned that their kinsman was no longer the sport of a passion so contrary to their interests. I flattered myself, that they would consider me for it; and, in short, that I had distinguished myself from other valets, who are usually more apt to encourage their masters in debauchery than to reclaim them. I was in love with honour; and reflected with pleasure, that I should pass for the Corypheus of all domestics. But this idea, agreeable as it was, vanished in a few hours; when my patron arriving, said, "Friend, I have had a very sharp conversation with Euphrasia, who affirms, that thou hast misinterpreted her; and art, if she is to be believed, no other than an impostor, altogether devoted to my nephews, out of regard to whom, thou sparest nothing to make me quarrel with her. I saw real tears trickle down her eyes; and she

swore by all that was sacred, that she never made any proposal to thee, or ever sees a man. Beatrice, who seems to be a good girl, protested the same thing, in such a manner, that my anger was appeased in spite of my teeth."

"How, Sir," said I, interrupting him in a sorrowful manner, "do you doubt my sincerity? Do you distrust"—"No, child," said he, interrupting me in his turn; "I do thee all manner of justice: I do not believe thee in a confederacy with my nephews. I am persuaded that thou art concerned for my interest only, and am obliged to thee: but appearances are deceitful. Perhaps what thou sawest existed only in thy own imagination; and, in that case, thou mayest guess how disagreeable thy accusation must be to Euphrasia. Be it as it may, she is a person whom I cannot help loving. I must even make the sacrifice to her which she demands, and that sacrifice is thy dismission. I am sorry for it, my poor Gil Blas," added he; "and I assure thee, I consented to it with regret; but I could not do otherwise. What ought to console thee, is, that I shall not send thee away unrecompensed: and I intend, moreover, to settle thee with a lady, a friend of mine, where thou wilt live very agreeably."

I was very much mortified to see my zeal thus turned against myself. I cursed Euphrasia; and deplored the weakness of Don Gonzales, who allowed himself to be led by the nose. The good old man, being very sensible that, in turning me

away merely to please his mistress, he did not behave in the most manly manner, made amends for his effeminacy, and gilded the pill I was to swallow with a present of fifty ducats. Next day, carrying me to the Marchioness of Chaves, he told her, in my hearing, that I was a young man who possessed many good qualities; that he had a regard for me; but family reasons not permitting him to keep me in his service, he begged she would admit me into her family. She received me that instant into the number of her domestics; so that I found myself translated, all of a sudden, into a new place.

CHAP. VIII.

THE CHARACTER OF THE MARCHIONESS OF CHAVES, AND OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO USUALLY VISITED HER.

THE Marchioness of Chaves was a widow of five-and-thirty, handsome, tall, and well shaped, who enjoyed a yearly income of ten thousand ducats, without the care and incumbrance of children. I never saw a woman of more gravity, or one who spoke less; though this did not hinder her from being looked upon as the most witty lady in Madrid. The great concourse of people of quality, and men of learning, who daily frequented her house, contributed, perhaps, more than any thing she said, to give her this reputation. But this I will not undertake to decide: let it suffice to say, that her name imported the idea of a superior genius, and that her house was called, by way of excellence, the Court of Criticism.

There was actually some performance or other read here every day; sometimes new plays, and sometimes other pieces of poetry; but nothing except serious subjects were deemed worthy of attention, humorous pieces being despised: the best comedy, or the most ingenious and witty romance, was looked upon as a feeble production, that deserved no praise; whereas the least serious work, such as an ode, eclogue, or sonnet, passed for the

greatest effort of human understanding. But it often happened that the public did not confirm the sentence of the court; on the contrary, was sometimes so unpolite as to hiss those pieces which had been there very much applauded.

I was chamberlain in this house; that is, my office consisted in getting every thing ready in the apartment of my lady, for the reception of company, and to set the chairs for the men, and the cushions for the women, after which I stationed myself at the chamber door, to announce * and introduce the persons who arrived. While I was employed in this office for the first time, the governor of the pages, who, by accident, was then in the antechamber with me, described them all very pleasantly as they came in. His name was Andrew Molina, naturally dry and satirical, with a good share of understanding. A bishop being the first who presented himself, I announced him, and when he had entered, the governor observed, "That prelate is a man of a very pleasant character. Having a little credit at court, he would fain make every one believe that he has a great deal, and offers his interest to all the world, without serving any body. One day, meeting at court with a gentleman who saluted him, he stopped, loaded him with civilities, and squeezing his hand, said, 'I am wholly devoted to your service; pray,

* The announcer is a domestic who stands in the hall on visiting days, and pronounces aloud the names of the company, as they come in: from the Latin word *annunciare*.

Sir, put me to the proof: I shall never die satisfied, until I have an opportunity of obliging you.' The gentleman having thanked him in a very grateful manner, they parted; and the prelate said to one of his followers, 'I think I know that man: I have a confused idea of having seen him somewhere.'

Immediately after the bishop, the son of a grandee appeared; and when I had introduced him into my lady's chamber, "That nobleman," said Molina, "is another original. You must know that he goes often to a house, in order to treat of some important affair with the gentleman who lives in it, and comes away without remembering to speak a syllable about the matter. "But," added the governor, seeing two ladies advance, "there come Donna Angela de Penafiel, and Donna Margarita de Montalvan, two ladies between whom there is not the least resemblance. Donna Margarita, who piques herself on being a philosopher, will undertake the most profound doctors of Salamanca in a dispute, without suffering their argument to get the better of her argumentation. As for Donna Angela, she does not affect the virtuoso, although her understanding is perfectly well cultivated: her conversation is sensible, her sentiments refined, and her expression delicate, noble, and natural." "This last is an amiable character," said I to Molina; "but the other, in my opinion, is inconsistent with the fair sex." "Not very consistent," he replied with a

sneer; "and even a great many men are rendered ridiculous by such a disposition. Madam the Marchioness, our lady," continued he, "is also a little tainted with philosophy. What wrangling will there be here to-day! God grant that religion may not be concerned with this dispute."

As he spoke these words, we perceived a meagre man come in, with an air of reserve, and a grim countenance. My governor did not spare him. "This," said he, "is one of your serious wits, who would fain pass for great geniuses, by the favour of a few sentences learned from Seneca, and who are easily detected to be fools, if you examine them a little closely." The next that came in was a well-shaped cavalier, with a Grecian mien, that is, a very self-sufficient appearance. When I asked who he was, Molina answered, "He is a dramatic poet, who has composed, in his time, an hundred thousand verses, which never brought him in four-pence: but, in recompence for that, he has procured a considerable settlement by six lines of prose."

I was going to inform myself of the nature of a fortune got so easily, when I heard a great noise on the stair-case. "Good?" cried the governor; "there comes the Licentiate Campanario, who gives notice of his approach before he appears, and, beginning to talk at the street-door, continues without intermission until he goes away." Sure enough the whole house rang again with the voice of the thundering licentiate, who, at length,

entered the antechamber with a bachelor of his acquaintance, and did not leave off speaking all the time his visit lasted. "Signior Campanario," said I to Molina, "seems to be a great genius." "Yes," replied my governor, "he has some bright sallies, quaint expressions, and a good deal of humour: but, over and above his being an unconscionable talker, he does not fail to make repetitions: and, not to over-rate his talents, I believe the agreeable and comic air with which he seasons every thing he says, constitutes his chief merit; for the greatest part of his strokes would do no great honour to a collection of witticisms."

Abundance of other people came in, of whom Molina made very humorous pictures, among which he did not forget that of the Marchioness. "I assure you," said he, "our patroness is a lady of a very even temper, in spite of all her philosophy. She is not at all difficult to please, and one undergoes very few caprices in her service. She is one of the most reasonable women of quality I know, and is even without passion: she has as little taste for gallantry as for play, and loves conversation only: in short, most ladies would think her way of life insupportably tiresome." The governor, by this eulogium, prepossessed me in favour of my mistress; nevertheless, some days after, I could not help suspecting that she was not such an enemy to love; and I will declare on what foundation my suspicion was built.

One morning, while she was at her toilet, a

little man presented himself to me, about forty years old, of a disagreeable figure, more dirty than the author Pedro de Moya, and very much hump-backed into the bargain. When he told me he wanted to speak with the Marchioness, I asked him, from whom? To which he answered with a haughty look, "From myself: Tell her, I am the gentleman of whom she spoke yesterday to Donna Ann de Velasco." I introduced him into my lady's apartment, and signified his arrival; upon which she immediately exclaimed, in a transport of joy, "Show him in." She not only gave him a favourable reception, but likewise ordered all her women out of the room: so that the little hunch-back, more happy than an honester man, remained alone with her; while the chambermaids and I made ourselves merry with this fine tête-à-tête, that lasted near an hour; after which my patroness dismissed the crook-back, loaded with civilities, that shewed how well she was satisfied with his conversation, which, in effect, captivated her so much, that she told me one evening, in private, "Gil Blas, when the man with the hump returns, bring him into my apartment as secretly as possible." I obeyed; and, when the little man came the next morning, conducted him by a private stair-case to my lady's chamber. I performed the same office, most devoutly, two or three times, without suspecting that there could be any gallantry in the case. But the malignity which is so natural to mankind soon

inspired me with strange ideas, and I concluded that the inclination of the Marchioness was either very whimsical, or that the hunch-back acted the part of a go-between.

Prepossessed with this opinion, I often said to myself, " If my lady was in love with a handsome man, I could forgive her; but if she is captivated by this baboon, truly I cannot excuse the depravity of her taste." How much was I mistaken in my patroness! The little hunch-back dabbled in magic; and as his skill had been extolled to the Marchioness, who willingly listened to the delusions of such impostors, she honoured him with these private conversations, in which he shewed her things in a glass, taught her to turn the sieve, and, for money, revealed all the mysteries of the cabala. Or rather, to speak truly, he was a sharper, who subsisted at the expence of credulous people, and was said to have several women of quality under contribution.

CHAP. IX.

THE INCIDENT IN CONSEQUENCE OF WHICH GIL BLAS QUITTED THE MARCHIONESS DE CHAVES; AND THE COURSE HE FOLLOWED AFTERWARDS.

I HAD already lived six months with the Marchioness de Chaves, and, I confess, was satisfied with my condition; but the destiny I had to fulfil would not permit me to live longer in that lady's house, nor even in Madrid: I will therefore recount the adventure that obliged me to remove from both.

Among my lady's maids there was one called Portia, who, besides her youth and beauty, possessed such an amiable character, that I attached myself to her, without knowing that I must dispute her heart with a rival. The secretary of the Marchioness, who was a proud man, and very much addicted to jealousy, being captivated with my princess, no sooner perceived my passion, than (without endeavouring to find out my reception with Portia) he resolved to fight me in single combat, and for that purpose appointed me to meet him one morning in a private place. As he was a little man, whose head scarce reached my shoulders, and seemed at the same time very weak, I did not think him a very dangerous rival, but repaired with great confidence to the place ap-

pointed, in hopes of gaining an easy victory, and making a merit of it with Portia: but the event did not answer my expectation. The little secretary, who had been two or three years at a fencing-school, disarmed me like an infant, and holding the point of his sword to my throat, "Prepare," said he, "for the mortal blow, or else give me thy word of honour that thou wilt this day quit the service of the Marchioness de Chaves, and never more think of Portia." I made him that promise, and kept it without reluctance; being ashamed to appear before the rest of the servants, after my defeat, especially before the fair Helen who had been the cause of our duel. My sole intention, in returning to the house, was to carry off my goods and money; which having done, I set out the same day for Toledo, my purse being pretty well furnished, and my back loaded with a bundle composed of my whole wearing apparel: for though I had not engaged to quit Madrid, I thought proper to leave it at least for some years; and formed the resolution of making the tour of Spain, and of halting at every town. "The money I have," said I to myself, "will carry me a great way; for I do not intend to be extravagant; and when I have no more, I will betake myself again to service. A young man of my accomplishments will find places in abundance, whenever he pleases to go in quest of them.

I longed, in particular, to see Toledo, whither

I arrived at the end of three days, and took up my lodging in a good inn, where I passed for a gentleman of consequence, by the favour of my intriguing dress, which I did not fail to put on, and by the foppish airs which I affected. It was at my own option to establish a correspondence with some handsome women who lived in the neighbourhood: but understanding that I must begin by spending a great deal of money upon them, I bridled my desires, and feeling still a strong inclination for travelling, after having seen every thing that was curious in Toledo, I left it one morning by break of day, and took the road to Cuenca, with an intention to go to Arragon. On the second day of my journey, I went into an inn on the road, and just as I sat down to refresh myself, a company of soldiers, belonging to the holy brotherhood, came in, and calling for wine, fell to drinking. While they were over their cups, I heard them describe a young man whom they had orders to apprehend. "The gentleman," said one of them, "is not more than twenty years of age, has long black hair, a good shape, an aquiline nose; and is mounted on a bay horse."

I listened without seeming to give attention to what they said, and truly I did not concern myself much about the matter. Leaving them in the inn, I set forward on my journey, and had not walked a quarter of a league, when I met a young gentleman, of a good mien, mounted on

a chesnut-coloured horse. "Upon my faith," said I to myself, "this is the man whom the soldiers are in search of: he has long black hair, and an aquiline nose. I must do him a good office. "Sir," said I to him, "give me leave to ask, whether or not you have some affair of honour on your hands?" The young gentleman, without making any reply, looked earnestly at me, and seemed surprised at my question. Upon which I assured him, that it was not out of curiosity that I had addressed him in this manner; and he was very well convinced of it, when I told him what I had overheard at the inn. "Generous stranger," said he, "I will not deny that I have reason to believe myself the person whom those soldiers want to apprehend; and therefore will take another road, in order to avoid them." "It is my opinion," I replied, "that we should immediately seek some place where we may be secure, and where we may be sheltered from that storm which I see brewing in the air, and which will burst very soon." At that instant we discovered and repaired for a tufted alley of trees, that conducted us to the foot of a mountain, where we found an hermitage.

It was a large deep grotto that time had scooped in the rock, to which the art of man had added a kind of front, built of pebbles and shell-work, and quite covered with turf. The adjacent field was strewed with a thousand sorts of flowers, which perfumed the air; and, hard by the grotto, we per-

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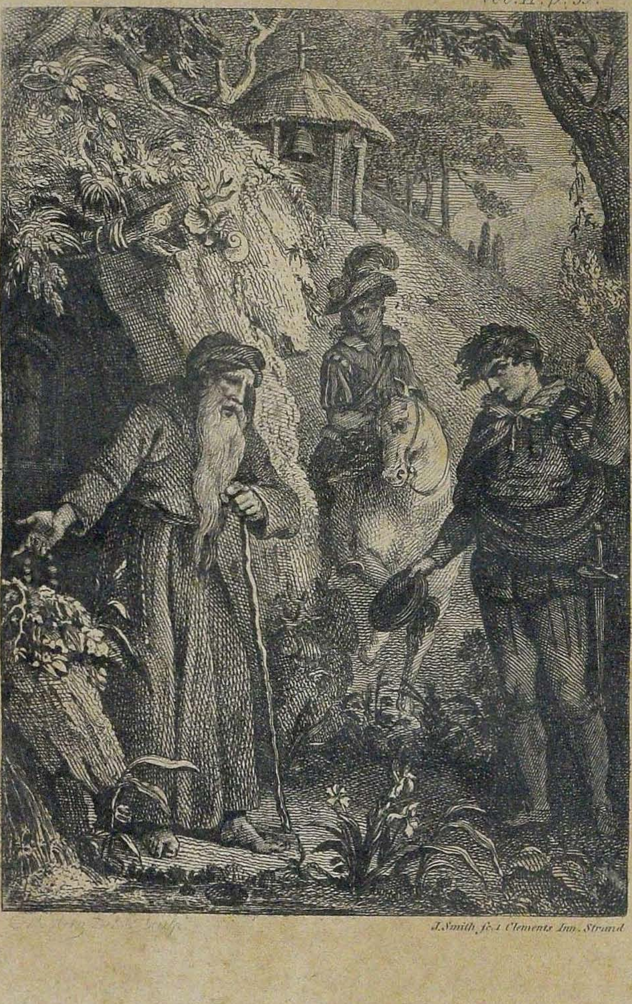

J. Smith. sc. 1 Clements Inn. Strand

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ceived a little opening in the rock, from whence issued, with an agreeable noise, a spring of water, that ran winding along a meadow. At the entrance of this solitary habitation appeared a holy hermit, stooping under the weight of old age, supporting himself with a staff in one hand, and holding in the other a rosary of large beads, composed of twenty courses at least. His head was buried in a brown woollen cap with long ears; and his beard, more white than snow, came down to his middle. When we approached him, "Father," said I, "be so good as to favour us with shelter from the impending storm." "Enter, my children," replied the anchorite, after having observed me attentively; "this hermitage is at your service and you may stay here as long as you please. As for your horse," added he, pointing to the fore part of his habitation, "he will be very well accommodated in that place." The gentleman who accompanied me disposed of his beast accordingly, and then we followed the old man into the grotto, which, as soon as we had entered, a great shower fell, mingled with flashes of lightning and dreadful claps of thunder. The hermit fell on his knees before an image of St. Pacomo*, which was

* St. Pacomo was an Ægytian, who lived in the fourth century, and founded several monasteries, consisting of between twelve and sixteen hundred monks each: his faith is said to have been so effectual, that he walked among serpents unhurt; and, when he had occasion to cross the Nile, was transported from one side to the other on the back of a crocodile.

glued to the wall; and we followed his example. Mean while the thunder ceased, and we got up; but as the rain continued, and the day was far spent, "My children," said the old man, "I would not advise you to proceed on your journey in such weather, unless you have some pressing affair." The young man and I replied, that we had none that hindered us from halting; and that, if we were not afraid of incommoding him, we would beg leave to pass the night in his hermitage. "You will not incommode me in the least," said the hermit: "but will have reason to complain of your lodging; for you must lie hard; and I have nothing to offer you but anchorite's fare."

So saying, the old man made us sit down at a small table; and presenting us with a few onions, a crust of bread, and a pitcher of water, "My sons," said he, "you see my usual repast; but to-day I will commit an excess out of regard to you." He then brought a little cheese, with two hand-fuls of filberds, and spread them upon the table. The young man, who had no great appetite, did not much honour to the feast; upon which, the hermit observing him, said, "I perceive that you are accustomed to better tables than mine; or rather, that sensuality has corrupted your natural taste. I have been in the world, as you are now: the most delicate viands, the most exquisite ragouts, were not too good for my palate: but since I have lived in solitude, I have retrieved the former purity of my taste, and at present can re-

lish nothing but roots, fruits, and milk; in a word, that which composed the nourishment of our first parents."

While he spoke in this manner, the young man sunk into a profound reverie, which the hermit perceiving, "My son," said he to him, "you have an oppression on your spirits; may I not know the cause? Unbosom yourself to me. It is not curiosity, but charity alone, that animates my request. I am of age to give advice; and perhaps your situation requires it." "Yes, father," replied the cavalier with a sigh, "I have, doubtless, occasion for advice, and I will follow yours, since you are so good as to offer it. I believe I run no risk in discovering myself to a man of your character." "No, my son," said the senior, "you have nothing to fear on that score, and may safely trust me with any secret." In this confidence, the cavalier spoke as follows.

CHAP. X.

THE STORY OF DON ALPHONSO AND THE FAIR SERAPHINA.

I WILL conceal nothing from you, father, nor from the other gentleman who hears me; for, after the generosity he has showed, I should be to blame to distrust him. Listen, therefore, to my misfortunes. I was born in Madrid, and my origin is this. An officer of the German guards, called the Baron de Steinbach, going home one evening, perceived a bundle of white linen at the foot of the stair-case. He took it up, and carried it to his wife's apartment, where he found it to be a new-born infant, wrapped in very handsome swaddling-clothes, with a billet, importing, that it belonged to persons of quality, who would one day make themselves known, and that it had been baptised by the name of Alphonso. I am that unhappy infant, and this is all that I know of my birth and parentage. Sacrificed to honour or infidelity, I know not whether my mother exposed me, in order to conceal a dishonourable flame; or, seduced by a perjured lover, found herself under the cruel necessity of disowning the fruit of her womb.

Be that as it will, the Baron and his lady were touched with my situation; and, as they had no children of their own, determined to educate me under the name of Don Alphonso. As I advanced

in years, their attachment to me increased: my flattering and complaisant behaviour attracted their caresses every moment: in a word, I had the good fortune to make myself beloved; they gave me all kinds of masters; my education became their only study; and, far from expecting impatiently, that my parents would discover themselves, they seemed, on the contrary, to wish that my birth would always remain a secret. As soon as the Baron found me able to carry arms, he entered me in the service, procured for me an ensign's commission, ordered my small equipage to be got ready; and, to animate me the more to seek occasions of acquiring glory, he represented to me, that the career of honour was open to every body; and that in war I might obtain a name the more glorious, as I should owe it to myself alone. At the same time, he revealed the secret of my birth, which he had hitherto concealed from my knowledge. As I passed for his son in Madrid, and effectually believed myself to be so, I own, this piece of information gave me a great deal of pain: I could not then, nor cannot now, think of it without shame; for the more my sentiments seemed to argue me of a noble origin, the greater my confusion was to see myself abandoned by those who gave me being.

I went to serve in the Low-Countries; but the peace being concluded soon after, and Spain rid of her enemies, though not of those who envied her prosperity, I returned to Madrid, where I received fresh marks of tenderness from the Baron

and his lady. About two months after my return, a little page came into my room one morning, and presented to me a billet, conceived pretty nearly in these words: "I am neither ugly nor ill-shaped, "yet you see me frequently at the window, without paying homage with your eyes. This behaviour but ill answers your gallant appearance; "and piques me so much, that I wish I could "inspire you with love, to be revenged on your "indifference."

Having read this billet, I did not doubt that it was from a widow, called Leonora, who lived opposite to our house, and had the reputation of being very coquetish. I interrogated the page, who was on the reserve at first; but, in consideration of a ducat, which I slipped into his hand, he satified my curiosity; and even undertook to carry an answer, by which I informed his mistress, that I acknowledged my crime, and was already sensible of her being more than half revenged.

I was not at all insensible of this kind of conquest; I kept in the house all that day, and took great care to be always at the window, that I might observe the lady, who did not forget to show herself at hers. I made love to her in dumb show; she answered my signals; and next morning let me know by her page, that if I would be in the street betwixt eleven and twelve at night, I might converse with her at a parlour window. Though I did not find myself very much in love with such a forward widow, I did not fail to return a very

passionate answer, and to wait for night with as much impatience as if I had been violently smitten. In the evening I went out to walk in the Prado till the hour of assignation; and was no sooner arrived at that place, than a man, mounted on a fine horse, alighted hard by me, and accosting me hastily, said, "Are not you the son of Baron Steinbach?" When I replied in the affirmative, "You are the person," said he, "who intends to converse with Leonora at her window. Her page has shewn me her letters and your answers; and I have followed you this evening, from your own house hither, to let you know that you have a rival whose pride is very much mortified in being obliged to dispute a heart with such a one as you. I believe I need say no more; we are now in a private place. Let us draw, therefore; unless, to avoid the chastisement I prepare for you, you will promise to break off all correspondence with Leonora. You must either sacrifice to me the hopes you have conceived, or forfeit your life immediately." "You ought then," said I to him, "to have requested, not demanded, that sacrifice. I might, perhaps, have granted it to your intreaty; but I refuse it to your threats."

"'Tis very well," he replied, after having tied his horse to a tree: "draw then: it does not become a person of my quality to stoop so low as to intreat a man of your station: most people of my rank, in the same case, would have revenged themselves in a less honourable way." I was

shocked at these last words, and seeing his sword already unsheathed, drew mine also. We attacked one another with such fury, that the combat did not last long. Whether he behaved with too much heat, or I had more skill, I know not, but I gave him a mortal thrust, upon which I saw him stagger and fall. Whereupon, minding my own safety only, I mounted his horse, and took the road to Toledo. I durst not return to the Baron's house, being well assured my adventure would very much afflict him; and when I considered the danger in which I was, I thought I could not get out of Madrid too soon.

In the midst of the most melancholy reflections, I rode the remaining part of the night, and all the morning; but towards noon, was obliged to halt, in order to give my horse some rest, and avoid the heat of the day, which grew insupportable. I tarried, therefore, in a village till sun-set, after which, I continued my journey, resolving to make but one stage to Toledo. I had got two leagues beyond Illescas, when, towards midnight, I was surprised in the middle of a field, with just such another storm as fell to-day; upon which I drew near the wall of a garden that I perceived at the distance of a few paces, and not finding a more convenient shelter, stood with my horse as close as I could to the door of a summer-house situated at the end of the wall, over which there was a balcony. As I leaned against the door, I perceived it open, which I ascribed to the negligence of ser-

vants; and alighting, less out of curiosity than for the sake of being better screened from the rain, which did not fail to incommode me while I remained under the balcony, I entered the ground-floor of the summer-house, with my horse, which I led by the bridle.

I employed myself, during the tempest, in observing the place; and though I could distinguish nothing but by the lightning that flashed around, it was easy to perceive that the house could not belong to a vulgar owner. I expected still that the rain would cease, intending to proceed on my journey; but a great light, that I observed at a distance, made me change my resolution. Leaving my horse in the summer-house, the door of which I took care to secure, I advanced towards the light, persuaded that there was still somebody in the house not yet gone to bed, and resolved to desire a lodging for that night. Having crossed several walks, I arrived at a saloon, the door of which I found open also. I entered it, and when I had observed all the magnificence of the place, by the light of a fine crystal branch, I no longer doubted that I was in the house of some rich nobleman. The pavement was of marble; the wainscot very handsome, and curiously gilt, the cornices of admirable workmanship; and the ceiling painted by the most skilful masters: but what I took particular notice of, was an infinite number of busts of Spanish heroes, supported on pedestals of jasper, all round the saloon. I had leisure

enough to consider all these things; for though I listened attentively, from time to time, I neither heard the least noise, nor saw a living creature appear.

There being on one side of the saloon a door unbolted, I half opened it, and perceived a range of rooms, the last of which only was lighted. "What shall I do?" said I to myself. "Shall I return, or boldly penetrate to that room?" I concluded that the most judicious step would be to return as I came. But I could not resist my curiosity, or rather the force of destiny, that dragged me along: I advanced from one room to another, until I arrived at that in which was the light; that is, a taper burning on a marble table, in a silver candlestick gilt. I at first observed very handsome and gay summer furniture; but in a little time, casting my eyes upon a bed, the curtains of which were half drawn on account of the heat, I saw an object that attracted my whole attention. This was a young lady, who, notwithstanding the noise of the thunder, lay in a profound sleep. I approached her softly, and, by the light of the taper, discovered a complexion and features that quite dazzled me. My heart took the alarm at the sight! I felt my soul smitten and transported! But, whatever emotions agitated my breast, the opinion which I had of her high rank, hindered me from entertaining the least rash thought, and respect prevailed over inclination.

While I glutted myself with the pleasure of

contemplating her beauty, she awoke; and you may guess what was her surprise, when she saw a man, whom she did not know, in her bedchamber at midnight. She trembled when she perceived me, and shrieked aloud; while I endeavoured to remove her fear, by kneeling before her, and saying, "Madam, be not afraid: I come not hither to do you the least injury." I was going on, but her consternation was such that she did not hear me. She called her women several times; but nobody answering, she put on a thin night-gown, which lay at the bed's feet, got up hastily, and went into the rooms which I had crossed, still calling her maids, and a younger sister, who lived under her care. I expected to see all her servants appear; and had reason to apprehend that, without being heard, I should meet with very disagreeable treatment; but, luckily for me, she called to no purpose; nobody came, but an old domestic, who could not have given her much assistance, had she had any thing to fear. Nevertheless, growing more resolute by his presence, she asked, with a haughty air, who I was, and how, and for what reason, I had the boldness to enter her house? I then began to justify myself; and had no sooner told her, that I found the door of the summer-house open, than she exclaimed, "Just heaven! what do I presage!"

So saying, she seized the light, and searching all the rooms, one after another, could see neither her maids, nor her sister; but even observed, that

they had carried off all their baggage. Her suspicions appearing now but too plain, she returned to me, and said, with a great deal of emotion, "Perfidious wretch! add not dissimulation to treachery. It was not chance that brought thee here. Thou art one of the followers of Don Fernando de Leyva, and an associate in his crime: but do not think to escape; I have still people enough to secure thee." "Madam," answered I, "do not confound me with your enemies. I know no such person as Don Fernando de Leyva, and am even ignorant of your name and quality. I am an unfortunate man, whom an affair of honour hath obliged to leave Madrid; and I swear by all that is sacred, I would not have entered your house, had it not been for the storm that surprised me! Judge, therefore, more favorably of me; and, instead of believing me an accomplice in the outrage you have suffered, think me rather disposed to revenge it." These last words, and the tone with which they were pronounced, appeased the lady, who seemed to look upon me no longer as her enemy. But, if her indignation vanished, it was only to make room for her grief. She wept bitterly. I was melted by her tears, and no less afflicted than she, although I did not know the cause of her sorrow. I not only wept with her, but, impatient to revenge her wrongs, was seized with a transport of fury. "Madam," cried I, "what injury have you received? Speak! I espouse your resentment. Shall I pursue Don

Fernando, and stab him to the heart? Name all those whom you would have sacrificed. Command my services. Whatever dangers, whatever misfortunes, may be attached to your vengeance, that stranger, whom you thought confederate with your enemies, will tempt them all for your sake."

This transport surprised the lady, and stopped the course of her tears. "Ah, Sir!" said she, "pardon my suspicion on account of the cruel situation in which I am. These gentle sentiments have undeceived Seraphina, and even freed me from the shame of seeing a stranger witness to the affront put upon my family. Yes, generous unknown! I acknowledge my error, and am far from rejecting your assistance; but I ask not the death of Don Fernando." "Well, Madam," I replied, "what services can you expect of me?" "Sir," answered Seraphina, "the cause of my complaint is this: Don Fernando de Leyva is in love with my sister Julia, whom he saw by accident at Toledo, where we usually live. Three months ago he asked her in marriage of the Count de Polan, my father, who refused his consent, on account of an old enmity subsisting between our families. My sister, not yet fifteen years of age, must have been weak enough to follow the advice of my women, whom Don Fernando has, doubtless, bribed to his interest; and he, informed of our being by ourselves in this country-house, has taken this opportunity of car-

rying her off. I want, therefore, to know what retreat he has chosen for her, that my father and brother, who have been at Madrid these two months, may take their measures accordingly. In the name of God!" added she, "give yourself the trouble of traversing the neighbourhood of Toledo, and of making an exact inquiry about the ravisher. My family will be eternally indebted to you for the favor."

The lady did not consider that the employment which she prescribed for me but ill agreed with the circumstances of a man who could not get out of Castile too soon. But how was it possible for her to make this reflection, which did not even occur to me? Charmed with the happiness of finding myself necessary to the most amiable person in the world, I accepted the commission with a transport of joy, and promised to acquit myself with equal diligence and zeal. In effect, I did not wait for day, in order to go and accomplish my purpose, but quitted Seraphina on the instant, conjuring her to pardon me for the fright I had occasioned, and assuring her, that she should hear news of me in a very little time. I went out as I had come in; but so much engrossed by the lady, that it was not difficult for me to perceive I was already captivated by her beauty. I was the more confirmed in this, by the eagerness I felt in serving her, and the amorous chimeras which my imagination produced. I fancied that Seraphina, although possessed by her sorrow, had observed

my growing passion, and beheld it, perhaps, not without some pleasure: I even imagined, that if I could bring her any news of her sister, and the affair should turn out according to her wish, the whole would redound to my honour.

Don Alphonso, interrupting the thread of his story in this place, said to the old hermit, "I beg pardon, father, if, too full of my passion, I enlarge upon circumstances which are, doubtless, tedious to you." "No, my son," replied the anchorite, "they are far from being tedious: I am even pleased to know how far you are smitten by this young lady of whom you talk, that I may regulate my advice accordingly."

"My imagination, heated with these flattering ideas," resumed the young man, "I searched two days for Julia's ravisher: but it was to no purpose for me to make all imaginable inquiry; I could not discover the least traces of him. Very much mortified at having reaped no fruit from my researches, I returned to Seraphina, whom I expected to find in the utmost anxiety: but she was much more tranquil than I imagined, and informed me, that she had been more lucky than I; that she knew what was become of her sister, having received a letter from Don Fernando himself, importing, that being privately married to Julia, he had placed her in a convent at Toledo. "I have sent his letter to my father," added Seraphina. "I hope the affair will terminate in an amicable manner, and that a solemn marriage will in a

short time extinguish the hatred which has so long divided our families."

When the lady had made me acquainted with her sister's fate, she made an apology for the trouble she had given me, and the danger to which she might have exposed me, by engaging me to pursue a ravisher, without remembering that I had told her, I was obliged to fly on account of an affair of honour. She excused herself, therefore, in the most obliging terms; and, as I had need of rest, carried me into the saloon, where we sat down together. She wore a loose gown of white taffeta with black stripes, and a little hat of the same stuff, with a black plume of feathers, which made me guess that she was a widow; though she appeared so young, that I did not know what to think of her condition.

If I longed for an explanation on this head, she was no less desirous of knowing who I was; and accordingly begged that I would tell her my name, not doubting (as she said) that, by my noble air, and still more, the generous pity that made me enter so warmly into her interests, I belonged to some considerable family. The question embarrassed me not a little: I blushed, was confounded; and own, that, being less ashamed to lie than to tell the truth, I answered, I was the son of the Baron de Steinbach, an officer of the German guards. "Tell me, likewise," replied the lady, "for what reason you quitted Madrid. I offer you, beforehand, all the credit of my father,

as well as of my brother, Don Gaspard: that is the least mark of gratitude I can show to a gentleman who neglected the care of his own life to serve me." I made no difficulty of recounting to her all the circumstances of my duel; upon which she blamed the gentleman whom I had slain, and promised to interest her whole family in my favor.

When I had satisfied her curiosity, I begged her to gratify mine, and asked whether her faith was free or plighted. "Three years ago," she replied, "my father obliged me to marry Don Diego de Lara, and I have been a widow fifteen months." "Madam," said I, "what misfortune has deprived you of your husband so soon?" "I will tell you, Sir," resumed the lady, "in return for the confidence you have reposed in me."

"Don Diego de Lara was a very genteel cavalier, who entertained a most violent passion for me; and, in order to please me, put in practice, every day, all that the most tender and passionate lover could invent, to make himself agreeable to the object of his flame; but, though he possessed a thousand good qualities, he could never touch my heart. Love is not always the effect of assiduities and distinguished merit. Alas!" added she, "an utter stranger often enchants us at first sight. Well, it was not in my power to love him; but was more confounded than charmed with the tokens of his tenderness, to which I was forced to make returns without inclination; though I, in secret, taxed myself with ingratitude. I like-

wise found my own situation very unhappy. Unluckily for him, as well as me, his delicacy was still greater than his love. He discovered, in my actions and discourse, the most secret emotions of my breast, and dived to the very bottom of my soul. He complained incessantly of my indifference, and deemed himself the more unhappy in being unable to please me, because he very well knew that there was no rival in his way: for I was scarce sixteen years old; and, before he offered me his hand, he had gained over all my women, who assured him, that no man had as yet attracted my regard. "Yes, Seraphina," he would often say, "I wish you had been prepossessed in favor of another, and that alone were the cause of your indifference to me: my assiduities, and your own virtue, would triumph over that prejudice; but I despair of making a conquest of your heart, since it remains untouched by all the love I have shown." Tired with hearing him repeat the same discourse, I told him, that instead of troubling his repose and mine by too much delicacy, he would do well to leave his grievances to time. And, truly, one of my age was not capable of relishing the refinements of such a delicate passion, so that Don Diego ought to have taken my advice: but seeing a whole year elapsed, without his being farther advanced than the first day, he lost his patience, or rather his reason; and, pretending to have an affair of consequence at court, departed to serve as a volunteer in the

Low Countries, where he soon found in battle that which he went to seek—I mean the end of his torments and life."

After the lady had favoured me with this relation, the singular character of her husband became the subject of our discourse: in which we were interrupted by the arrival of a courier, who delivered to Seraphina a letter from the Count de Polan. She asked my permission to read it, and I observed, that while she perused it, she grew pale and trembled. After having read it, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, heaved a profound sigh, and her face was in a moment covered with tears. I could not behold her grief with tranquillity: I was greatly disturbed; and, as if I had presaged the cruel stroke I was to suffer, felt myself chilled with a mortal fear. "Madam," said I, with a faltering voice, "may I ask what are the fatal contents of that letter?" "There, Sir," replied Seraphina, in a melancholy manner, giving me the paper. "Read yourself what my father writes. Alas! you are but too much concerned."

I was confounded at her words, and, trembling while I took the letter, read,

"Your brother, Don Gaspard, fought yesterday in the Prado*, where he received a mortal thrust, of which he died this day; having declared, in his last moments, that the person who killed

* Prado (which signifies a meadow) is the public walk at Madrid, as the Park is at London.

him is the son of Baron de Steinbach, an officer of the German Guards. What adds to the misfortune is, that the murderer has escaped me by flight: but wheresoever he conceals himself, I shall spare no pains to find him out; for which purpose I will write to some governors, who will not fail to apprehend him, if he passes through the towns of their jurisdiction; and by letters directed to other people, I will cause all the roads to be blocked up.

"THE COUNT DE POLAN."

You may easily conceive how all my faculties were disordered by this billet. I remained for some moments without motion or power of speech; and even in the midst of this depression, perceiving what a fatal obstruction the death of Don Gaspard would be to my love, was seized with the most violent despair! I threw myself at the feet of Seraphina, and presenting my naked sword, "Madam," said I, "spare the Count de Polan the trouble of finding out a man who might conceal himself from his resentment. Revenge your brother, by sacrificing his murderer with your own hand. Strike, Madam; and let the same sword that deprived him of life, become fatal to his unfortunate adversary." "Sir," replied Seraphina, affected with my behaviour, "I loved Don Gaspard; therefore, although you killed him honourbly, and he brought his misfortune upon himself, you may be assured I enter into the resentment of

my father. Yes, Don Alphonso, I am your enemy, and will act against you every thing that the ties of blood and friendship can require: but I will not take the advantage of your bad fortune, which has put you in my power. The same honour that arms me against you, hinders me from taking a base revenge. The rights of hospitality ought to be inviolable, and therefore I will not repay the service you have done me with the conduct of an assassin. Fly, then; elude, if you can, our pursuit, and the rigour of the laws, and save your life from the danger that threatens it."

"How, Madam!" I replied, "when you can revenge yourself, do you leave it to the laws, which may perhaps defeat your resentment? Ah! rather pierce the heart of a miserable wretch, who does not deserve your forbearance! No, Madam, do not honour me with such a noble and generous proceeding. You know not who I am: though I pass in Madrid for the son of the Baron de Steinbach, I am no other than an unfortunate foundling, whom he has brought up out of pure compassion: I do not even know the authors of my being." "No matter," said Seraphina, interrupting me with precipitation, as if my last words had given her new pain, "were you the lowest of mankind, I will do what honour prescribes."—"Well, madam," said I, "since the death of a brother cannot provoke you to shed my blood, I will incense you by a new crime, the audacity of which, I hope, you will not excuse—I adore you

—I could not behold your charms without being dazzled with them; and, in spite of the obscurity of my fate, had entertained the hope of making you mine for ever. I was so much in love, or rather so vain, as to flatter myself that heaven (which, perhaps, favours me by keeping my origin concealed) would disclose it to me one day, when I should be able to tell you my name without a blush. After this confession, which injures you so much, do you still hesitate in punishing me?" "This rash declaration," replied the lady, "would, doubtless, offend me at another time; but I pardon it, in consideration of your present agitation: besides, my own anxiety will not permit me to listen to such discourse. Once more, Don Alphonso," added she, shedding some tears, "leave this place; fly from a house you have filled with sorrow; for every moment you stay increases my affliction." "Madam, I will no longer resist," said I, rising. "I must banish myself from you; but think not that, studious of preserving a life which is odious to you, I will go and seek an asylum where I can be secure. No, no! I devote myself to your resentment. I will go to Toledo, wait with impatience for the fate you decree; and, exposing myself to your pursuit, advance willingly towards the end of my misfortunes."

So saying, I withdrew. My horse was brought out for me, and I repaired to Toledo*,

* Toledo, situated on the Tagus, is the capital of New Castile, the seat of an archbishop, primate of all Spain. It was formerly

where I staid a whole week; and, truly, was at so little pains to conceal myself, that I do not know how I escaped being taken; for I cannot believe that the Count de Polan, whose chief care was to shut up all the passages against me, would imagine that I could not pass through Toledo. In fine, I yesterday left that city, where I seemed to be tired of liberty; and, without keeping any certain road, am come to this hermitage, like a man who has nothing to fear. You see, father, what engrosses my thoughts, and I crave the assistance of your advice.

famous for a circus, capable of containing 150,000 people. There is a great manufacture of silk and woollen stuffs in this city; in which, too, are made the best blades in the world: whence a good sword is frequently called a Toledo.

CHAP. XI.

THE OLD HERMIT DISCOVERS HIMSELF, AND GIL BLAS PERCEIVES THAT HE IS AMONG HIS ACQUAINTANCE.

ALPHONSO having ended the melancholy narration of his misfortunes, the old hermit said to him, "Son, you have been very imprudent in staying so long at Toledo. I look upon all you have recounted in a light very different from that in which you see it; and your passion for Seraphina is, in my opinion, pure madness. Believe me, you must forget that young lady, who cannot possibly be yours. Yield, therefore, with a good grace, to the obstacles that separate you from her, and follow your destiny, which, in all likelihood, will be productive of many other adventures. You will, questionless, find some other young lady, who will make the same impression upon your heart, and whose brother you have not slain."

He was going to add a great many other things, in order to exhort Don Alphonso to have patience, when we saw another hermit, loaded with a wallet, well stuffed, enter the hermitage. He was come from the town of Cuenca, where he had made a very successful gathering,; seemed younger than his companion, and wore a red bushy beard. "Welcome, brother Antonio," said the old anchorite to him. "What news from town?" "Bad enough,"

answered the red-haired brother, putting a letter in his hand; "that billet will inform you." The senior having opened, and read it with a suitable attention, cried, "God be praised! since the plot is discovered, we must regulate our conduct accordingly. Let us change our stile," added he. "Signior Don Alphonso, you see a man exposed like yourself to the caprice of fortune. I am informed from Cuenca, which is a town about a league from this, that somebody has done me an ill office with justice; all the agents of which are to set out to-morrow for this hermitage, in order to secure my person: but they shall not find the hare in the gin. This is not the first time that I have been in such dilemmas. Thank God, I have almost always extricated myself in another shape; for such as you see me, I am neither an old man nor an hermit."

So saying, he stripped himself of a long robe which he wore, and appeared in a doublet of black serge with slashed sleeves. Then he pulled off his cap, untied a string that supported his false beard, and, all of a sudden, assumed the figure of a man between twenty and thirty years of age. Brother Antony, by his example, quitted his hermit's habit, rid himself of his red beard in the same manner as his companion had done, and took out of an old worm-eaten coffer, a shabby short cassock, with which he clothed himself. But you may guess my surprise, when, in the person of the old anchorite, I recollected Signior Don Raphael; and

in that of brother Antony, my most dear and faithful valet, Ambrose de Lamela! "Good God!" cried I immediately, "I find myself among my acquaintances here." "True, Signior Gil Blas," said Raphael, smiling, "you have found two of your friends when you least expected it. I confess you have some reason to complain of us; but let us forget what is past, and thank heaven for our meeting again. Ambrose and I make a tender of our services; and I can tell you they are not to be despised. You must not think us the worst of mankind: we neither assault nor assassinate; we seek only to live at the expense of our neighbours; and if theft be a crime, necessity excuses the injustice. Associate with us, and lead a rambling life, which is extremely agreeable, when conducted with prudence: not but, with all our sagacity, the chain of second causes is sometimes such, that we meet with unlucky adventures. What then! we enjoy the good with the better relish on that very account. We are hardened against inconstant weather, and accustomed to the vicissitudes of fortune."

"Signior Cavalier," added the false hermit, speaking to Don Alphonso, "we make the same proposal to you, which, considering your present situation, I think you ought not to reject; for, not to mention the affair that obliges you to conceal yourself, you must certainly be in want of money." "Yes, truly," said Don Alphonso, "and that, I own, increases my chagrin." "Well,

then," replied Raphael, "do not leave us; you cannot do better than join your fortune to our's; you shall want nothing; and we will baffle all the search of your enemies. We know almost every inch of Spain, having travelled over it; and are acquainted with the woods, mountains, and every place proper for an asylum against the brutality of justice." Don Alphonso thanked them for their good will; and being actually without money or resource, resolved to bear them company. I came to the same determination, because I would not leave the young gentleman, for whom I felt a growing friendship.

Having agreed to go all together, we began to deliberate, whether we should set out that instant, or, first of all, give some assaults to a full bottle of excellent wine, which brother Antony, the day before, had brought from Cuenca; but Raphael, as a man of the greatest experience among us, represented that, before every thing else, we must think of our safety. He was of opinion, therefore, that we should march all night, in order to gain a very thick wood between Villardesa and Almodabar, in which we should halt, and, being perfectly secure, spend the day in taking our repose. This advice being approved, the false hermits made two bundles of their baggage and provisions, and laid them in equilibrio on Don Alphonso's horse. This was done with great expedition; after which we quitted the hermitage, leaving as a prey to justice, the two hermits' robes, with

the white and red beards, two pallets, a table, a rotten chest, two old straw-bottomed chairs, and the image of St. Pacomo.

We walked all night, and began to feel ourselves very much fatigued, when, at day break, we perceived the wood to which we were bound. The sight of a port gives new vigour to sailors tired with a long voyage. We accordingly took courage, and at last arrived at the end of our journey before sun-rise. Penetrating into the thickest part of the wood, we stopped at a very agreeable spot upon a small glade, surrounded with a good many tall oaks, the branches of which meeting, formed an umbrageous arch, impervious to the heat of the day. Here we unbridled the horse to let him feed, after we had unloaded him, and sitting down together, took out of brother Antony's wallet some large pieces of bread, with a good many slices of roasted meat, and began to attack them as if for a wager. Nevertheless, in spite of our appetites, we often left off eating to embrace the bottle, which incessantly circulated, passing from the clasp of one into the embraces of another.

Towards the end of the repast, Don Raphael said to Don Alphonso, "Signior cavalier, after the confidence you have honoured me with, it is but just that I recount to you the history of my life, with the same sincerity." "It will give me great pleasure," replied the young man. "And me, in particular," said I; "for I have an extreme curiosity to hear your adventures, which are doubt-

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less well worth our attention." "That I'll answer for," replied Raphael; "and I intend to commit them to writing one day. That shall be the amusement of my old age; for I am still young, and would have the volume enlarged: but at present we are fatigued; let us refresh ourselves with a few hours of sleep. While we three enjoy our rest, Ambrose will watch against all surprise, and then sleep in his turn. Though I believe we are very safe in this place, it is always good to be upon our guard." So saying, he stretched himself upon the grass, Don Alphonso did the same, I followed their example, and Lamela stood sentry.

Don Alphonso, instead of taking some repose, kept himself awake, with reflecting upon his misfortune: and I could not close an eye. As for Don Raphael, he soon fell asleep; but awaking an hour after, and seeing us disposed to listen, he said to Lamela. "Friend Ambrose, thou mayst take now a comfortable nap." "No, no," replied Lamela, "I have no inclination to sleep: and though I am well acquainted with all the passages of your life, they are so instructive for people of our profession, that I shall be very well entertained in hearing them recounted once more." Don Raphael immediately began the history of his life in these terms.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SE...

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

THE HISTORY OF DON RAPHAEL.

I AM the son of an actress at Madrid, whose name was Lucinda, famous for her theatrical talents, and still more for her gallantry. As for my father, I cannot, without presumption, assume any one in particular. 'Tis true, I might tell what man of quality was in love with my mother when I came into the world; but that epocha would by no means be a convincing proof of his being the author of my birth. A woman of my mother's profession is so little to be trusted, that even while she appears the most attached to one nobleman, she almost always substitutes in his place some other person for his money.

There is nothing like putting one's self above scandal. Lucinda, instead of bringing me up in obscurity at her own house, took me by the hand, without ceremony, and carried me to the theatre in a very honorable manner, without giving herself any trouble about the discourse that passed at her expense, or the malicious sneers that the sight

of me never failed to create. In a word, I was her darling, and caressed by all the men that visited her so much, that it looked as if nature pleaded with them in my behalf.

I was allowed to pass the first twelve years of my life in all sorts of frivolous amusements: scarce was I taught to read and write; and still less pains were taken to initiate me in the principles of my religion: I learned only to dance, sing, and play upon the guitar. This was all I could do, when the Marquis de Leganez asked me as a companion to his only son, who was pretty much of my age. Lucinda willingly complied with his request, and it was then I began to think seriously. Young Leganez was not farther advanced than I: that little nobleman did not seem qualified by nature for the sciences. He hardly knew one letter of the alphabet, although he had been under the instruction of a preceptor fifteen months. His other masters succeeded no better: he exhausted their patience. They were not, indeed, permitted to use rigor; but expressly ordered to instruct without tormenting him; and that order, joined to his natural dullness, rendered all their lessons of little or no effect.

But the preceptor invented an excellent expedient to intimidate the young nobleman, without contradicting his father's order. He resolved to flog me when his pupil deserved punishment: and he did not fail to put his resolution in practice. Not relishing this expedient, I ran away,

and complained to my mother of such unjust treatment: but, in spite of all her tenderness for me, she had resolution enough to resist my tears; and considering that it was a great advantage for her son to live with the Marquis de Leganez, sent me back immediately. I was now abandoned to the preceptor, who, perceiving that his invention had produced a good effect, continued to flog me still instead of the young nobleman; and in order to make the deeper impression upon him, disciplined me with great severity. I was sure to pay, every day, for young Leganez; and I may venture to affirm, that he did not learn one letter of his alphabet, which did not cause me an hundred lashes. Judge you what his rudiments stood me in!

The birch was not the only disagreeable thing I suffered in this house: as every body knew me, the meanest servants, even the scullions, reproached me with my birth. This disgusted me so much, that I ran away one day, after having found means to seize the preceptor's whole stock of ready money, which might amount to an hundred and fifty ducats. Such was the vengeance I took for the stripes he had so unjustly bestowed upon me. I performed this slight of hand with admirable dexterity, though it was my first essay: and having had the address to baffle the search that was made for me during two days, left Madrid, and repaired to Toledo, without being pursued.

I was then just going into my fifteenth year. What a pleasure it was to be independent at that

age, and entirely master of my own actions? I soon contracted an acquaintance with young people, who polished me up, and assisted me to spend my ducats. I associated with knights of the post, who cultivated my happy disposition so well, that, in a little time, I became one of the most dexterous of the order. At the end of five years, being seized with an inclination to travel, I quitted my confederates, and beginning my peregrinations by Estremadura, went as far as Alcantara; but before I reached that place, finding an opportunity of exerting my talents, I did not let it escape. Being a-foot, and moreover loaded with a pretty heavy knapsack, I frequently halted to repose myself under the trees, that offered me their shade, at a little distance from the highway. In one of these resting-places, I found two lads very well dressed, talking merrily on the grass, while they enjoyed the coolness of the shade. I saluted them very courteously, and entered into conversation with them, at which they did not seem displeased. The eldest was not more than fifteen, and they seemed both to be extremely raw. "Signior cavalier," said the youngest to me, "we are sons of two rich citizens of Placentia, who, longing extremely to see the kingdom of Portugal, in order to satisfy our curiosity, have taken an hundred pistoles each from our parents; and, as we travel on foot, hope to go a great way with that sum. What is your opinion of the matter?" "If I had so much," I replied, "God knows where I should go: I would

visit the four corners of the world. What the devil! two hundred pistoles! it is an immense sum, and you will never see the end of it. If it be agreeable to you, gentlemen," added I, "I shall have the honor of accompanying you as far as the city of Almeria, where I am going to take possession of the estate of an uncle, who has been settled in that place twenty years, or thereabouts."

The young citizens assured me they would be glad of my company. Whereupon, having rested ourselves a little, we set forwards all together towards Alcantara, where we arrived a good while before night, and went to lodge at a good inn. We asked for a room, and were shown into one, where there was a press with a key in it. Having bespoke supper, I proposed to my comrades, that we should go and see the town, while it was getting ready. They accepted the proposal; we locked up our knapsacks in the press, the key of which one of the citizens put in his pocket, and going out of the inn, went to view the churches. While we were in the cathedral, I pretended, all of a sudden, to have an affair of consequence in hand, and said to my companions, "Gentlemeu, I have just recollected that a person of Toledo desired me to deliver a short message to a merchant who lives near this church. Pray wait for me here, and I will be back in an instant." So saying, I left them, ran to the inn, flew to the chest, forced the lock, and rummaging the knapsacks

of my young cits, found their pistoles. Poor children! I did not leave them so much as one to pay for their night's lodging. I carried all off, quitted the town as fast as possible, and took the road to Merida, without giving myself any further concern about them.

That adventure put me in a condition to travel agreeably. Though I was young, I found myself capable of conducting myself with prudence; and I may say, I was pretty old, considering my years. Having resolved to buy a mule, I put my resolution in practice at the next village. I even converted my knapsack into a portmanteau, and began to assume a little more of the man of consequence. On the third day I met a man singing vespers, as loud as he could roar, on the highway. Judging, by his appearance, that he was a chanter, I accosted him with courage. "Signior Bachelor, you sing purely; your heart goes with your profession, I see." "Sir," answered he, "I am a chanter, at your service, and amuse myself with clearing my pipes, as you hear."

In this manner we entered into conversation, and I perceived that I had got in company with a most witty and agreeable fellow, about four or five and twenty years old. As he travelled on foot, I made my mule walk slowly, that I might have the pleasure of conversing with him; and, among other things, the discourse turned on Toledo. "I know that city perfectly well," said the chanter, "having lived a good while in it, and I believe,

have some friends there." "In what place," answered I, interrupting him, "did you live at Toledo?" He replied, "In the New Street. I lived with Don Vincent de Buena Garra, Don Matthias de Cordel, and two or three more gentlemen of honour: we lodged, eat, and passed our time agreeably together." These words surprised me; for it must be observed, that those gentlemen, whose names he mentioned, were the very sharpers with whom I had kept company at Toledo. "Signior Chanter," cried I, "those gentlemen, whom you have named, are of my acquaintance, and I lived with them in the New Street." "I understand you," he replied smiling; "that is to say, you are entered into the company since I left it three years ago," "I have," said I, "quitted those gentlemen, because I was seized with an inclination to travel. I intend to make the tour of Spain; knowing that I shall improve by experience." "Without doubt," he replied; "one must travel before one can have a finished education: it was for this reason that I left Toledo, where I lived very agreeably. I thank heaven," added he, "for having met, when I least expected it, a knight of my own order. Let us join, travel together, make attempts on our neighbour's purse, and lay hold of every occasion that presents itself of exerting our skill."

He made this proposal so frankly, and with such a good grace, that I accepted it. He won my confidence all of a sudden, by bestowing his

upon me, and we unbosomed ourselves to one another. I recounted my history to him, and he made no mystery of his adventures to me; letting me know, that he was just come from Portalegro, whence an unsuccessful trick had obliged him to escape with precipitation in the dress he now wore. After he had communicated to me his whole affairs, we resolved to go to Merida together, in order to try our fortune, by striking some lucky stroke, if possible, and then immediately decamping to remove elsewhere. From that moment our stock became common betwixt us: indeed, Moralez (so my companion was called) was not in a very brilliant situation. His whole fortune consisted of five or six ducats, with some baggage that he carried in a wallet: but, if I was richer than he in ready money, he, on the other hand, was more consummate than I in the art of deceiving mankind.

We mounted my mule by turns, and in this manner arriving at Merida, halted at an inn in the suburbs, where my comrade took out of his wallet a dress, in which he was no sooner clothed, than he went to take a turn through the town, reconnoitre the ground, and look for an opportunity of going to work. We considered every object that presented itself with great attention, and, as Homer would have said, resembled two kites, that cast their eyes abroad to look for birds on which to prey. In short, we waited in hopes that chance would afford an occasion on which we might em-

ploy our industry, when we perceived in the street an old grey-haired gentleman fighting against three men, who pushed hard at him. I was shocked at the inequality of the combat, and, as I am naturally a tilter, flew to the assistance of the old man. Moralez followed my example; we attacked the gentleman's three enemies, and obliged them to seek their safety in flight.

The senior was mighty thankful. "We are very glad," said I to him, "that we happened to be here so seasonably, to give you assistance: but let us know, at least, who we have had the good fortune to serve; and pray tell us for what reason those three men would have assassinated you." "Gentlemen," he replied, "I am too much obliged to you to refuse the satisfaction you desire. My name is Jerome de Moyadas, and I live on my fortune in this city. One of those assassins, from whom you have delivered me, made love to my daughter, asked her of me in marriage some days ago, and, as he could not obtain my consent, attacked me sword in hand, in order to be revenged." "And may one ask," I replied, "your reason for refusing your consent to that gentleman?"—"I will tell you," said he. "I had a brother, a merchant in this city, whose name was Augustin: two months ago he was at Calatrava, and lodged at the house of Juan Velez de Menbrilla, his correspondent, with whom he was so intimate, that, in order to strengthen their friendship still more, he promised my only daughter Florentina in mar-

riage to his son, not doubting that he had credit enough with me to perform his promise. Accordingly my brother, upon his return to Merida, no sooner mentioned the affair, than I, out of love to him, consented to the marriage. He then sent Florentina's picture to Calatrava; but, alas! had not the satisfaction of finishing the work; for he died three weeks ago, conjuring me on his death-bed, to dispose of my daughter to none but his correspondent's son. This I promised, and on this account refused Florentina to the gentleman who assaulted me, although he is a very advantageous match. I am a slave to my word, and every moment expect the son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla, on whom I will bestow my daughter in marriage. though I never saw either him or his father. I beg pardon," continued Jerome de Moyadas, "for troubling you with this oration; but you yourself exacted it of me."

I listened to him with great attention, and resolving upon a trick that struck me in the head of a sudden, affected great astonishment, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and turning towards the old man, said, in a pathetic tone, "Ah, Signior Moyadas! is it possible that, on my arrival at Merida, I should be so happy as to save my father-in-law!" The old citizen was strangely surprised at these words, as well as Moralez, who showed, by his countenance what a great rogue he took me to be. "What do I hear?" replied the senior. "How! are you the son of my brother's corres-

pondent?" "Yes, Signior Jerome de Moyadas," answered I, with an audacious countenance, while I threw my arms about his neck, "I am that happy mortal for whom the adorable Florentina is destined. But, before I express my joy at entering into your family, allow me to shed into your bosom the tears which the remembrance of your brother Augustin renews! I should be the most ungrateful of all mankind, if I was not sensibly touched with the death of a person to whom I owe all the happiness of my life!" So saying, I again embraced honest Jerome, and covered my eyes with my hand, on pretence of wiping away my tears. Moralez, who, in a twinkling, perceived the advantage we might reap from a trick of this kind, did not fail to second the imposture, and passing for my valet, even topped me in the sorrow I had manifested for the death of Signior Augustin. "Signior Jerome," cried he, "what a loss you have suffered in your brother's death! He was such an honest man! the very phœnix of commerce! a disinterested merchant! a merchant of integrity! there are few of his fellows to be met with."

We had to do with a simple and credulous man, who, so far from suspecting the cheat, was himself an assistant in it. "And why," said he, "did not you come straight to my house? You should not have gone to lodge at an inn; considering the terms on which we are, no ceremony ought to have been observed." "Sir," answered Mora-

lez, taking upon him to speak for me, " my master is, I grant you, a little ceremonious: not but that he is excusable in some shape, in being unwilling to appear before you in his present situation; for we have been robbed in our journey hither, and lost all our baggage." " The young man," said I, interrupting him, " tells you nothing but the truth, Signior de Moyadas. This misfortune did not permit me to come to your house: I durst not present myself in this garb before the eyes of a mistress who has not as yet seen me; and, for that reason, I waited the return of a valet, whom I have sent to Calatrava." " This accident," replied the old man, " ought not to have hindered you from coming to stay at my house, where I intend you shall immediately take up your lodging."

So saying, he carried me home with him; and, by the way, we talked of the pretended robbery that I had suffered, when I assured him, that what gave me the greatest concern, was my having lost, with my baggage, the picture of Florentina. Whereupon the citizen observed with a smile, that I might console myself for that loss the more easily, as the original was better than the copy. In effect, as soon as we came to his house, he called his daughter, who was not above sixteen years of age, and might have been counted an accomplished young lady; saying to me, " You see the object which my late brother promised to you."—" Ah, Signior!" cried I, with a passionate

air, "you have no occasion to tell me that this is the amiable Florentina! These charming features are engraved on my memory, and still more upon my heart. If the picture which I lost, and which was only a slight sketch of such perfection, could inflame me with the most ardent passion, judge how I must be transported at this moment!" "You flatter me too much," said Florentina; "for I am not vain enough to imagine that my qualifications justify your discourse." "Go on with your compliments," said the father. At the same time he left me alone with his daughter, and taking Moralez aside, "Friend," said he to him, "you have lost all your baggage, then, and, without doubt, your money too.' "Yes, Sir," answered my comrade: "a great number of banditti poured upon us, near Castil Blazo, and left us nothing but the clothes on our backs: but we shall, in a very short time, receive bills of exchange, which will set all things to rights again."

"But, until those bills arrive," replied the old man, taking a purse out of his pocket, "here are an hundred pistoles at your service." "O, Sir!" said Moralez, "my master would not accept them for the world. I find you do not know him. Zooks! he is a man of great delicacy on these occasions. He is none of those fashionable youngsters, who are apt to take up from every body. He does not love to be in debt, and would rather beg his bread than borrow one farthing." "So much the better," said the honest citizen; "I

esteem him the more on that account: I cannot bear to see young men contract debts. I pardon it, indeed, in people of quality, because it is a privilege they have possessed a long time. I will not," continued he, "affront thy master; and since it will only give him pain to offer him money, we must say no more about it." With these words, he was going to put the purse in his pocket again, but my companion held his hand, saying, "Hold, Signior Moyadas; whatever aversion my master has to borrowing, I do not despair of prevailing upon him to accept your hundred pistoles. It is only from strangers he is shy of borrowing; he is not so ceremonious with his own family: he can even demand of his father, with a good grace, whatever money he has occasion for. The young gentleman, you perceive, knows how to distinguish persons, and ought to look upon you, Sir, as a second father."

Moralez, by such discourse, secured the purse of the old man, who came and rejoined us; and finding his daughter and me engaged in mutual compliments, interrupted our conversation, by telling Florentina the obligation he lay under to me; and, on that score, made me professions which convinced me of his gratitude. I laid hold of such a favorable disposition, and told the citizen, that the most sensible mark of acknowledgment he could show, would be to hasten my marriage with his daughter. He yielded with a good grace to my impatience, assuring me, that in

three days at farthest I should be Florentina's husband; and that, instead of six thousand ducats, which he had promised for her dower, he would give me ten, as a proof of his being deeply affected with the service I had done him.

Moralez and I, therefore, lived with the honest man, Jerome de Moyadas, kindly treated, and in the agreeable expectation of ten thousand ducats, with which we proposed to make a sudden decampment from Merida. Our joy, however, was checked by fear: we were apprehensive that, in less than three days, the true son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla would arrive, and cross our good fortune.

This fear was by no means ill-founded: for the very next day, a kind of peasant, loaded with a portmanteau, came to the house of Florentina's father, when I was not at home, though my comrade was present. "Sir," said the peasant to the old man, "I belong to a young gentleman of Calatrava, called Signior de la Menbrilla, who is to be your son-in-law. We are just arrived, and he will be here presently. I came before to give you notice of his approach." He had scarce spoke these words, when his master appeared; a circumstance that surprised the old man very much, and disconcerted Moralez not a little.

Pedro, who was a very genteel young fellow, addressed himself to Florentina's father: but the honest citizen did not give him time to finish his discourse, and, turning to my companion, asked

the meaning of all this. Then Moralez, who was second to no man on earth in impudence, assumed an air of assurance, and said to the old man, "Sir, these two men belong to the troop of thieves who robbed us on the highway: I recollect them both very well, particularly him who has the audacity to call himself the son of Signior Juan Velez de la Menbrilla." The old citizen believed Moralez; and, persuaded that the strangers were cheats, said to them, "Gentlemen, you come too late; your scheme is prevented: Pedro de la Menbrilla has been in my house since yesterday." "Take care of what you say," answered the young man of Calatrava; "you have got an impostor in your family; for you must know that Juan Velez de Menbrilla has no other son than me." "I know better," replied the old man, "and am not ignorant of your profession: do not you recollect this young man, and remember his master, whom you robbed?" "If I was not in your house," said Pedro, "I would punish the insolence of that cheat, who has the presumption to call me a robber. Let him thank your presence, that restrains my indignation. Sir," added he, "you are imposed upon. I am the young man to whom your brother Augustin promised his niece. If you desire it, I can shew all the letters which he wrote to my father on the subject of the marriage. Will you not believe it when you see the picture of Florentina, which he sent to me some time before his death?"

"No!" said the old citizen, interrupting him; "neither the picture nor the letters will convince me: I know very well in what manner they fell into your hands; and I advise you, as a friend, to be gone from Merida as soon as you can." "This is too much," cried the young gentleman in his turn; "I will not suffer my name to be stolen with impunity, nor myself to be treated like an highwayman. I know some people in this place, whom I will find, and return to confound this impostor, that has prejudiced you against me." So saying, he retired with his valet, and Moralez remained master of the field: nay, this adventure made Jerome de Moyadas resolve to have the marriage celebrated that very day; and he went out instantly, to give the necessary orders for the occasion.

Though my comrade was very well pleased to see Florentina's father in a disposition so favorable for us, he was far from being perfectly at ease. Fearing the consequence of the measures which he concluded Pedro would certainly take, he waited for me with impatience, to communicate what had happened. Finding him, at my return, plunged in a profound reverie, "What is the matter, friend?" said I: "thou seemest in a brown study." He replied, "If I am, it is not without reason;" and informed me of the whole affair; adding, "Thou seest what cause I have to muse. It was thou alone who rashly threw us into this dilemma. It was a shining enterprise, I

own, and would have crowned thee with glory, had it succeeded: but, in all appearance, it will end ill; and it is my advice, that, in order to prevent explanations, we immediately betake ourselves to our heels, with the feather which we have plucked from the honest man's wing."

"Mr. Moralez," answered I to this proposal, "you yield to difficulties, I find, very soon, and do not do a great deal of honor to Don Matthias de Cordel, and the other cavaliers with whom you lived at Toledo: one, who has served his apprenticeship under such able masters, ought not to be easily alarmed. As for me, who intend to walk in the steps of these heroes, and prove myself a worthy pupil, I will bear up against the obstacle that terrifies you, and make my utmost effort to surmount it." "If you accomplish that," said my companion, "I will prefer you to all the great men in Plutarch."

Just as Moralez had done speaking, Jerome de Moyadas coming in, said to me, "You shall be my son-in-law this very evening. Your servant, I suppose, has told you what has happened. What do you think of the impudence of the rogue, who would have made me believe that he was the son of my brother's correspondent?" "Signior," answered I, in a melancholy tone, and with the most ingenuous air I could affect, "I find I am not qualified to carry on a deceit. I must sincerely own that I am not the son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla." "What do I hear!" cried the old

man, interrupting me with equal precipitation and surprise. "How! you not the young man to whom my brother—" "Pray, Sir," said I, interrupting him in my turn, "be so good as to hear me to an end. I have loved your daughter these eight days, during which my passion has detained me at Merida; and yesterday, after having come to your assistance, I was about to demand her in marriage, when you stopped my mouth, by giving me to understand that she was destined for another. You told me, that your brother, in his last moments, conjured you to bestow her upon Pedro de la Menbrilla; that you promised to comply with his request; and, in short, that you was a slave to your word. This information, I confess, overwhelmed me; and my love, reduced to despair, inspired me with the stratagem I put in practice. I must tell you, however, that I secretly upbraided myself with the trick I had put upon you; but I flattered myself that you would forgive it, when I should have discovered it, and convinced you, that I am an Italian prince, who travel incognito, and that my father is sovereign of certain vallies situated between the Swiss, the Milanese, and Savoy. I imagined that you would be agreeably surprised, when I should have revealed my birth; and I felt all the pleasure of a delicate and passionate husband, in the hope of declaring it to Florentina after our marriage. Heaven," added I, changing my tone, "would not indulge me in so much joy: Pedro de la Menbrilla ap-

pears, and I must restore him his name, how much soever the restitution will cost me. You are engaged, by your promise, to choose him for a son-in-law; and it is your duty to prefer him to me, without regard to my rank, or compassion for the cruel situation to which you are going to reduce me. I will not pretend to represent, that your brother was only the uncle of your daughter; and that you, being her father, it is more just to acquit yourself of the obligation you owe to me, than to make it a point of honor to keep a promise which is but slightly binding."

"Yes, doubtless, it is so," cried Jerome de Moyadas; "therefore I do not intend to hesitate between you and Don Pedro de la Menbrilla. If my brother Augustin was still alive, he would not blame me for giving the preference to a man who saved my life, and who is, moreover, a prince, who does not disdain to ask my alliance. I must be an enemy to my own happiness, and entirely deprived of my understanding, if I did not give you my daughter, and even press the celebration of the marriage." "But, Signior," I replied, "do nothing impetuously; consult your interest only; and, notwithstanding the nobility of my blood—" "Sure you jest!" said he, interrupting me; "ought I to hesitate one moment? No, my prince; I must humbly beseech you to honor the happy Florentina with your hand this very evening." "Well," said I, "be it so: go carry the news yourself, and inform her of her glorious fate."

While the honest citizen flew eagerly to tell his daughter that she had made a conquest of a prince, Moralez, who had heard the whole conversation, threw himself on his knees before me, saying, "Monsigneur the Italian prince, son of a sovereign of the vallies situated between the Swiss, Milanese, and Savoy, give me leave to embrace the feet of your highness, and testify the excessive joy I feel. Upon the faith of a knave, I look upon you as a prodigy. I thought myself the first man in the world; but truly I strike to you, although you have less experience than I." "What! you are no longer uneasy I hope," said I to him. "Oh! not at all," answered he; "I am no longer afraid of Signior Pedro; let him come again as soon as he pleases." Moralez and I now being firm in the stirrups, began to regulate the course we should take with the dowry, on which we depended so much, that we could not have thought ourselves more secure of it had it been already in our pockets. We had not as yet got it for all that, and the catastrophe of the adventure did not answer our expectation.

In a little time the young man of Calatrava returned, accompanied by two citizens and an alguazil, as formidable on account of his whiskers and swarthy complexion as of his employment. Florentina's father being present, "Signior de Moyadas," said Pedro to him, "I have brought hither three creditable people, who know me, and can tell you who I am." "Yes, sure!" cried the

alguazil, "I can tell; and I certify to all whom it may concern, that I know you. Your name is Pedro, and you are the only son of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla: whoever maintains the contrary, is an impostor." "I believe you, Mr. Alguazil," said the honest man Jerome de Moyadas; "your evidence is sacred with me, as well as that of the gentlemen merchants who are along with you. I am fully convinced that the young cavalier who conducted you hither, is the only son of my brother's correspondent: but that does not signify, I am no longer in the mind to give him my daughter."

"Oho! that's another affair," said the alguazil. "I come hither only to assure you, that I know this young man. You are master of your child; and nobody can compel you to part with her against your inclination." "Nor do I intend," said Pedro, interrupting him, "to offer violence to the inclination of Signior de Moyadas; but he will give me leave to ask, why he has changed his sentiments, or if he has any cause to complain of me? Let me be assured, at least, that I have not lost the sweet hope of being his son-in-law by my own misbehaviour." "I have no cause to complain of you," replied the old man; "and will even own, that it is with regret I see myself under a necessity of breaking my word, for which I conjure you to forgive me. I am persuaded that you are too generous to take it amiss, that I do not prefer you to a rival who has saved my life. Here

he is," pursued he, showing me to the company; "this is the person who rescued me from the most imminent danger; and that my excuse may have still more force, I must inform you he is no less than an Italian prince."

At these last words, Pedro became mute and confounded; the two merchants stared with the utmost surprise; but the alguazil, accustomed to look upon the worst side of every thing, suspected this wonderful adventure to be a trick that might turn out to his advantage: he eyed me very attentively; and his good-will being baffled by my features, which were utterly unknown to him, he examined my comrade with the same attention. Unluckily for my highness, he recollected Moralez, and remembering to have seen him in the prison of Ciudad Real, "Aha!" cried he, "here is one of our customers. I remember this gentleman, who, I assure you, is one of the most perfect sharpers within the kingdoms and principalities of Spain." "Softly, Mr. Alguazil," said Jerome de Moyadas; "the young man whom you paint so disadvantageously, is the domestic of a prince." "Very well," replied the alguazil; "I know enough to form my resolution accordingly, and judge of the master by the man. I do not doubt that these gallants are two cheats, who have agreed to impose upon you. I know how to manage in such cases; and to let you see that these wits are adventurers, I will carry them instantly to jail. I intend to introduce them to a private conversation

with Monsieur the Corregidor; after which, they will feel that whipping is not yet out of fashion." "Hold there, master officer," replied the old man; "do not let us push matters so far: people of your profession are not afraid of giving pain to a worthy man. May not this valet be a rogue, and his master a man of honor? Is it a new thing to see sharpers in the service of princes!" "You joke with your princes," said the alguazil. "This young fellow is a knight of the post, you may depend upon it; and I arrest him and his comrade in the king's name. I have twenty soldiers at the door, who shall drag them to prison, if they refuse to go with a good grace. Come, my prince," addressing himself to me; "let us march."

I was thunderstruck at these words, as well as Moralez, and our concern rendered us suspected to Jerome de Moyadas; or rather convinced him, that we actually had a design to defraud him. On this occasion, however, he behaved like a gallant man; saying to the alguazil, "Master officer, perhaps your suspicions are false, and perhaps they are but too true. Be it as it will, let us dive no farther into the affair: let these two young cavaliers retire wheresoever they please to go, and I beg you will not oppose their retreat: it is a favor I ask, in order to acquit myself of the obligation I owe them." "Were I strictly to do my duty," answered the alguazil, "I should imprison these gentlemen, without having any regard to your intreaty; but for your sake, I will relax a little,

provided that they quit the town this instant: for if I meet them to-morrow, egad! they shall see what will become of them."

When Moralez and I understood that we were free, we recollected ourselves a little, endeavoured to talk boldly, and affirmed that we were persons of honor; but the alguazil silenced us with a fierce look; and I do not know how, these people have an ascendancy over us. We were obliged, therefore, to abandon Florentina and her portion to Pedro de la Menbrilla, who, doubtless, became the son-in-law of Jerome de Moyadas, and retire with all speed, taking the road to Truxillo, with the consolation of having, at least, got an hundred pistoles by the adventure. About an hour before night, passing by a little village, with a resolution of going farther before we should halt, we perceived an inn of a pretty good appearance for that place, and the landlord, with his wife, sitting on long stones at the door. The husband, a tall, meagre old fellow, thrummed upon a wretched guitar, for the diversion of his wife, who seemed to listen with pleasure. "Gentlemen," cried the landlord, when he saw we did not stop, "I advise you to halt at this place: you will not find a village within three weary leagues of this; and even there, I assure you, you will not be so well served as here. Take my word for it, and walk into my house, where I will entertain you handsomely, at a reasonable rate. We suffered ourselves to be persuaded, and approaching the man and his wife,

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bid them good even: and having seated ourselves by them, began all four to talk of indifferent subjects. The landlord said he was an officer of the holy brotherhood: and his wife was a fat merry dame, who seemed to understand very well how to vend her commodities.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of twelve or fifteen cavaliers, some mounted on mules, and some on horseback, followed by thirty baggage moyls loaded with bales. "Ah! what a number of princes!" cried the landlord, at sight of so many people; "where shall I find lodging for them all?" In a moment the village was crowded with men and beasts. There was luckily, near the inn, a vast barn, in which the moyls and the baggage were disposed: the mules and horses belonging to the cavaliers were put in other places; and as for the men, they did not concern themselves so much about finding beds, as in bespeaking a good supper. The landlord, his wife, and a young maid-servant belonging to the house, were not idle: they slaughtered all the poultry in their yard, which, joined to some ragouts made of rabbits and cats, and a plentiful dish of soup, composed of cauliflowers and mutton, furnished entertainment enough for the whole company.

Moralez and I looked at the cavaliers, who from time to time eyed us also. At last we entered into conversation, and told them, that if it was agreeable, we would sup in company. They assured us that we could not do them a greater

pleasure: so we sat down all together at table. There was one among them who seemed to be the chief, and for whom the rest, though otherwise very familiar, did not fail to show some deference. It is true, indeed, he kept the upper end, talked in an elevated tone of voice, and even contradicted sometimes, in a cavalier manner, the sentiments of the rest, who, far from replying in the same manner to him, seemed to respect his opinions. The discourse falling, by accident, on Andalusia, and Moralez taking it into his head to praise Seville, this man said to him, "Signior Cavalier, you are making the eulogium of the city where I first drew breath; or at least I was born in its neighbourhood, since the town of Mayrena gave me to the world." "I can say the same thing," answered my companion. "I was likewise born at Mayrena, and I must certainly know your parents: pray, whose son are you?" "I am," said the cavalier, "the son of an honest notary, called Martin Moralez." "Upon my faith," cried my comrade with emotion, "the adventure is extremely singular: you are then my eldest brother, Manuel Moralez." "The very same," said the other; "and you are, I suppose, my younger brother, Lewis, whom I left in the cradle when I quitted my father's house?" "That is my name, indeed," replied my comrade. Upon which they both got up, and embraced one another with great affection. Then Signior Manuel said to the company, "Gentlemen, this event is altogether marvellous! I have by ac-

cident, met and discovered a brother, whom I have not seen these twenty years and more: allow me to present him to the company." All the cavaliers, who kept themselves standing, out of complaisance, saluted the young Moralez, and loaded him with caresses. Afterwards we sat down again at table, where we remained all night without going to bed; the two brothers sitting by one another, and conversing by themselves about their family, while the other guests drank and made merry.

Lewis, after a long conversation with Manuel, taking me aside, said, "All these cavaliers are domestics of the Count de Montanos, whom the king has lately named for viceroy of Majorca. They are conducting their master's equipage to Alicant, where they are to embark. My brother, who is become steward to that nobleman, has proposed to carry me along with him; and on account of the reluctance I expressed in leaving you, told me, that if you would accompany us, he would procure for you a good employment. Dear friend," added he, "I advise thee not to disdain the offer: let us go together to the island of Majorca: if we find it agreeable, we will stay there; and if we shall be displeased with our situation, we will return to Spain.

I willingly embraced the proposal: young Moralez and I joined the count's officers, and set out with them from the inn before day. Having by long marches gained the city of Alicant, I bought

a guitar, and took off a handsome suit of clothes before our embarkation; thinking of nothing but the island of Majorca; and Lewis Moralez was in the same disposition. We seemed to have renounced sharping altogether. To tell you the truth, we had a mind to pass for persons of honor among the cavaliers in whose company we were, and that kept a check upon our geniuses. At last we went merrily on board, flattering ourselves with the hopes of being at Majorca in a very little time; but scarce had we cleared the gulf of Alicant, when a terrible tempest arose. I might, in this part of my relation, take an opportunity to make a fine description of the storm; to paint the air all on fire, to make the thunder roar, the winds whistle, the mountain billows roll, &c. but all these flowers of rhetoric apart, I assure you the hurricane was violent, and obliged us to bear away for the point of the island of Cabrera, a desert isle, in which there is a little fort, at that time garrisoned by an officer and five or six soldiers, who gave us a very hospitable reception.

As we were obliged to stay there several days, in order to repair our sails and tackle, we invented different kinds of amusements to pass the time agreeably. Each followed his own inclinations: some played at primero, others sought different diversions; and I went to walk through the island, accompanied by those who loved such exercise. We skipped from rock to rock; for the ground was very uneven, full of stones, and very deficient

in good soil. One day, while we considered these parched withered places, and admired the caprice of nature, that shows herself fruitful or barren as she pleases, our noses were invaded all of a sudden with a most agreeable smell. We immediately turned to the eastward, from whence that odour came, and perceived with astonishment, among the rocks, a large, round, green spot, surrounded with honey-suckles, even more beautiful and sweet-scented than those that grow in Andalusia. We approached with pleasure those charming shrubs, which perfumed the air all round, and found that they bordered upon the entry of a very deep cavern, which being large and light, we descended to the bottom of it, turning by steps of stone, the ends of which were adorned with flowers, the whole forming a natural winding stair-case. When we had got down, we saw several little rills of water, which derived their sources from drops that incessantly distilled from the rocks within, creeping along sand more yellow than gold, and losing themselves in the earth. The water seemed so pure, that we were tempted to drink, and found it so fresh, that we resolved to return next day to the same place with some bottles of wine, persuaded that we should empty them with vast pleasure.

It was with regret we quitted such an agreeable place; and, when we went back to the fort, we did not fail to boast of our discovery; but the commandant cautioned us, as a friend, against

returning to the cavern, with which we were so much charmed. "For what?" said I to him. "Is there any thing to fear?" "Yes, without doubt," he replied: "the corsairs of Algiers and Tripoli sometimes land on this isle, to water at that spring; and one day surprised two soldiers of my garrison, whom they made slaves." It was in vain for the officer to tell us this with a very serious air; he could not persuade us, for we believed that he jested; and next day I returned to the cavern, with three more of my companions, without providing ourselves with fire-arms, to show that we dreaded nothing. Young Moralez would not be of the party, choosing rather to stay with his brother, and play in the fort.

Having descended, as the day before, to the bottom of the cave, we cooled some bottles of wine, that we had brought along with us, in the rivulets; and while we drank them deliciously, playing on the guitar, and conversing pleasantly together, we saw several men appear at the mouth of the cavern above, with large whiskers, turbans, and Turkish dresses. We imagined that it was a part of the Count's domestics, with the commandant of the fort, who had thus disguised themselves in order to frighten us; and prepossessed with this fancy, began to laugh, letting no less than ten of them come down, without thinking of defending ourselves. We were, however, soon undeceived in a melancholy manner, and convinced that it was a corsair, who came with his

people to carry us off. "Surrender, you dogs," he cried, in the Castilian tongue, "or you shall be all put to the sword." At the same time his followers presented their carabines to us; and we should have undergone a fine discharge, had we made the least resistance. We preferred slavery to death; and gave our swords to the pirate, who ordered us to be loaded with chains, and conducted to his vessel, which was not far off: then setting sail, he steered with a fair wind towards Algiers.

In this manner were we punished for neglecting the caution of the officer of the garrison. The first thing that the corsair did, was to rifle us of all the money we had. What a fine windfall for him! The two hundred pistoles taken from the young citizens of Placentia, the hundred which Moralez had received from Jerome de Moyadas, and which unluckily I had about me, were all swept away without mercy. My companions had also their purses well furnished. In short, it was an excellent prize. The pirate greatly rejoiced at his good luck; and the rascal, not satisfied with our plunder, insulted us with his raillery, which we did not feel half so much as the necessity that compelled us to bear it. After a thousand jokes, he ordered the bottles of wine which we had cooled at the fountain, and which his people had taken care to seize, to be brought to him, and began to empty them with his crew, drinking to our health by way of derision.

During this conjuncture the countenances of my comrades expressed the pain they felt; and their slavery mortified them the more, because they had formed the most delightful idea of their voyage to the island of Majorca, where they had laid their account with leading a most delicious life. As for me, I had fortitude enough to project a plan of conduct for myself; and, less afraid than my fellows, entered into conversation with the rallier, and even returned his jokes with a good grace. Pleased with my behaviour, "Young man," said he, "I like thy disposition; for, in the main, instead of sighing and groaning, it is better for one to arm himself with patience, and sail with the stream. Play to us a small air," added he, observing that I had a guitar; "let us see what thou canst do." I obeyed him, as soon as he had ordered my arms to be unchained, and began to thrum upon my guitar in such a manner as acquired his applause. I had, indeed, learned under the best master in Madrid, and played on that instrument pretty well. I sang likewise, and my voice gave no less satisfaction. All the Turks in the vessel expressed the pleasure they felt in hearing me, by gestures of admiration; a circumstance from which I concluded, that their taste for music was not extremely delicate. The pirate whispered to me, that I should not be an unhappy slave; and that one of my talents might depend upon an employment that would make my captivity very supportable.

I felt some joy at these words; but, flattering as they were, I had abundance of uneasiness on the score of this occupation, with the promise of which the corsair regaled me. When we arrived at the port of Algiers,* we saw a great number of people assembled to receive us, who, as soon as we were landed, shouted with joy: besides, the air resounded with the confused noise of trumpets, Moresco flutes, and other instruments used in that country, which formed a symphony more loud than agreeable. The cause of these rejoicings was a false report which had spread through the city, importing that the renegado Mehemet (that was our pirate's name) had perished in attacking a large Genoese vessel; so that all his friends, informed of his return, were eager in their expressions of joy.

We had no sooner set foot on shore, than I and my companions were conducted to the palace of Dey Solyman, where a Christian secretary, examining us one by one, asked our names, ages, country, religion and qualifications. Then Mehemet, shewing me to the Dey, extolled my voice, and assured him, that I played ravishingly on the guitar. This was enough to determine Solyman to choose me for his own service: accordingly, I was detained in his seraglio; while the other captives were led into a public place, and sold according to custom.

* Algiers, a city on the coast of Barbary, possessed by the Moors, who are at perpetual war with the Spaniards, and under the protection of the Turks.

What Mehemet had foretold to me in the vessel came to pass. My condition was very happy; far from being abandoned to jailers, or employed in laborious work, I was, by order of Solyman, disposed of in a particular place, with five or six slaves of quality, who expected every moment to be redeemed, and whose tasks were far from being painful. My business was to water the orange-trees and flowers in the garden, and I could not have been favored with a more agreeable occupation.

Solyman was a man of about forty years of age, well shaped, very polite, and, for a Turk, mighty gallant. His chief favorite was a Cashemirian* woman, who, by her understanding and beauty, had acquired an absolute dominion over him. He loved her even to adoration, and treated her every day with some entertainment or other; sometimes with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, and sometimes with a comedy in the Turkish taste; that is to say, a dramatic poem, in which modesty and decorum were as little regarded as the rules of Aristotle. The favorite, whose name was Farrukhnaz, was passionately fond of these diversions, and even made her women sometimes represent Arabian pieces before the Dey; wherein she herself played a part, and charmed all the spectators by the grace and vivacity of her action. I being

* Cashemire is a country under the dominion of the Great Mogul, called the Indian Paradise; remarkable for the beauty and wit of its women.

one day among the musicians, at a representation of this kind, Solyman ordered me to play upon the guitar, and sing alone, between the acts. I had the good fortune to please, was very much applauded, and the favorite seemed to look upon me with a favorable eye.

The very next day, while I was busied in watering the orange-trees in the garden, an eunuch passing by me, without stopping, or speaking one word, dropped a billet at my feet: I took it up in a confusion made up of fear and joy. I lay down upon the ground, that I might not be seen from the windows of the seraglio; and concealing myself behind the boxes in which the orange-trees were planted, opened the letter, in which I found a pretty valuable diamond, and these words in good Castilian:

"Young Christian, thank Heaven for thy captivity—love and fortune will make thee happy.—Love, if thou art sensible to the charms of a beautiful woman: and fortune, if thou hast courage to despise the greatest danger."

I did not in the least doubt that the letter came from the favorite Sultana: the style and diamond persuaded me that she must have been the author. Besides that I am not naturally very timorous, the vanity of being in the good graces of a Grand Signior's mistress, and, more than that, the hope of getting from her four times as much money as

would be necessary for my ransom, made me form the design of achieving that adventure, whatever dangers might attend it. I continued my work, musing upon the means of entering the apartment of Farrukhnaz, or rather expecting that she would pave the way; for I concluded that she would not stop there, but at least be at more than half the trouble. I was not mistaken: the same eunuch that passed me before, repassed an hour after, and said, "Christian, hast thou considered, and wilt thou have the boldness to follow me?" I answered, "Yes." He replied, "Very well: Heaven preserve thee. Thou shalt see me again to-morrow morning." So saying, he retired. Next day he appeared accordingly, about eight in the morning, and beckoned me to him. I obeyed the signal; and he conducted me into a hall, where there was a large piece of linen, which another eunuch and he had brought thither, and which they were to carry to the Sultana, for the decoration of an Arabian piece that she was preparing for the entertainment of the Dey.

The two eunuchs having spread out the cloth, laid me along within it, and at the hazard of my being suffocated, rolled it up again with me in the middle: then, each taking one end of it, carried me thus unquestioned into the bed-chamber of the fair Cashemirian, who had nobody with her but an old slave devoted to her pleasure. When the two unrolled the cloth, Farrukhnaz, at sight of me, broke forth into transports of joy, that well dis-

covered the genius of women in that country. Bold as I naturally was, I could not see myself transported, all of a sudden, into the secret apartment of the women, without being seized with fear. The lady easily perceived it; and, in order to dissipate my apprehension, said, " Young man, fear nothing. Solyman is gone to his country-house, where he will remain all day; so that we may converse together freely."

Encouraged by these words, I assumed a look that redoubled the favorite's joy. " I am pleased with your person," said she, " and intend to soften the rigor of your slavery. I believe you worthy of the sentiments I have conceived for you; for though you are in the dress of a slave, you have a noble and gallant air, that shows you are not of the vulgar. Speak freely, and tell me who you are. I know that captives of a noble birth disguise their rank, that they may be redeemed at an easier rate; but you have no occasion to behave in that manner with me: I should even be affronted at such a precaution, since I promise to set you at liberty. Be sincere, therefore, and confess that you are a young man of a good family." " Truly, madam," I replied, " it would be ingratitude in me to repay your generosity with dissimulation; and since you absolutely charge me to reveal my quality, you must be satisfied. I am the son of a Spanish grandee." Perhaps I spoke the truth; at least the Sultana believed it; and, pleased that she had thrown her eyes upon a gentleman of importance,

assured me that it should not be her fault, if we did not see one another often in private. We had a pretty long conversation, and I never saw a more engaging woman. She understood several languages, especially the Castilian, which she spoke pretty well. When she judged it time for us to part, I went, by her order, into an osier basket, covered with a flowered silk, the work of her own hand. Then the two slaves who brought me in were called, and carried me out as a present from the favorite to the Dey; a thing sacred to all the men who are entrusted with the guard of the women.

Farrukhnaz and I found other means of seeing one another, and that amiable captive inspired me with almost as much love for her as she had for me. Our intelligence remained secret during two months, although it is very difficult in a seraglio to conceal the mysteries of love so long from the Arguses that watch it. But an unlucky accident disconcerted our small affairs, and my fortune was entirely changed. One day, when I had been introduced to the Sultana in the body of an artificial dragon, that was made for a show, and was conversing with her, Solyman, whom I imagined was busy in the country, interrupted us, and entered so hastly into the apartment of his favorite, that the old slave scarce had time to advertise us of his arrival; consequently I had no leisure to conceal myself, and therefore was the first object that presented itself to the view of the Dey.

He seemed astonished at the sight of me, and his eyes kindled with fury. I looked upon myself as one that touched his last moment, and already imagined myself under the torture. As for Farrukhnaz, I perceived that she was terrified, indeed: but, instead of owning her crime, and asking pardon, she said to Solyman, "Signior, before you pronounce my sentence, deign to hear my defence: appearances doubtless condemn me, and I seem to have committed a piece of treason worthy of the most horrible chastisement. I have brought this young captive hither, and, in order to introduce him into my apartment, have used the same artifice which I would have employed, if I had entertained a violent passion for him. Nevertheless, I take our holy prophet to witness, that, notwithstanding this conduct, I am not unfaithful. I had a mind to converse with this Christian slave, in order to detach him from his sect, and engage him to follow that of the believers. I have found in him such a resistance as I expected; but, however, I have conquered his prejudice, and he has promised to embrace Mahometism."

I own, I ought to have contradicted the favorite, without any regard to the dangerous conjuncture in which I was; but being in the utmost dejection of spirit, affected with the danger in which I saw a woman whom I loved, and trembling for myself, I remained speechless and confounded. I could not utter one word; and the Dey, persuaded, by my silence, that his mistress said nothing but the

truth, was appeased. "Madam," said he, "I am willing to believe that you have not injured me, and that a desire of doing a thing agreeable to the prophet, has engaged you to hazard such a delicate action. I forgive your imprudence, therefore, provided this captive takes the turban immediately." He sent for a Marabou * that instant. I was clothed with a Turkish dress, and did all that was required, without having power to resist. Or rather, I was ignorant of what I did, so much were my senses disordered. How many Christians are there, who would not have been as base as I was on such an occasion!

After the ceremony, I quitted the seraglio, under the name of Sidy Hali, to exercise a small employment bestowed upon me by Solyman. I never saw the sultana again; but one of her eunuchs, coming to me one day, brought from her a present of jewels worth two thousand sultanins of gold, with a billet, in which the lady assured me, that she would never forget my generous complaisance, in suffering myself to be made a Mahometan in order to save her life. Truly, besides the presents I received from Farrukhnaz, I obtained through her an employment more considerable than the first, and in less than seven years became one of the richest renegadoes in the city of Algiers.

You may well believe, that if I assisted at the

* Marabous are Mahometan priests.

prayers which the Musselmen put up in their mosques, and fulfilled the other duties of their religion, it was only out of pure grimace. I preserved a determined resolution to re-enter into the bosom of the church; and, for that purpose, to withdraw one day into Spain or Italy with the riches which I should amass. In the mean time I lived very agreeably; was lodged in a fine house, had superb gardens, a great number of slaves, and very handsome women in my seraglio. Though the use of wine is forbid in that country to Mahometans, they do not fail, for the most part, to drink it in private. As for my own part, I drank it without ceremony, as almost all renegadoes do. I remember I had two companions with whom I often committed a debauch within the night. One was a Jew, the other an Arabian; and both, as I imagined, honest men; so that I lived with them in the greatest familiarity. One evening I invited them to supper; and a dog, of which I was passionately fond, having died that day, we bathed his body, and buried it with all the ceremony that is observed at the funerals of the Mahometans. In so doing we had no intention to ridicule the Mussulman religion, but only to amuse ourselves, and gratify a foolish whim that seized us in the middle of our debauch, to render the last duties to my dog.

This action, however, had well nigh ruined me. Next day a man came to my house, and said, "Signior Sidy Hali, I am come hither on an im-

portant affair. The Cady * wants to speak with you: take the trouble, if you please, to go to his house immediately. An Arabian merchant, who supped with you last night, has informed him of a certain impiety committed by you, with regard to a dog which you buried. For this reason I summon you to appear this day before that judge, otherwise I give you notice that you will be proceeded against in a criminal manner." So saying, he went away, leaving me thunderstruck with this citation. The Arabian had no cause to complain of me, and I could not comprehend the traitor's reason for playing me this trick. Nevertheless, the thing was not to be neglected. I knew the cady was a man severe in appearance, but not at all scrupulous at bottom: so I put two hundred sultanins of gold into my purse, and repaired to his house. He carried me into his closet, and said, with a stern look, "You are an impious, sacrilegious, and abominable man: you have interred a dog like a Mussulman: what horrid profanation! Is it thus then you regard our most sacred ceremonies? and did you become a Mahometan only to make a jest of our worship?" "Mr. Cady," I replied, "the Arabian who has made such a malicious report of me, that false friend, is an accomplice in my crime, if it be a crime to grant the honors of burial to a faithful domestic—an animal that possessed a thousand good qualities. He

* The Cady is the civil magistrate in every town in Turkey.

loved people of merit and distinction so much, that even in his last moments, as a testimony of his friendship, he has left them his whole fortune by a will, of which I am the sole executor. He bequeaths twenty crowns to one, thirty to another; and, Sir, he has not forgot you," added I, taking out my purse: here are two hundred sultanins of gold which he charged me to give you." The Cady, losing his gravity at this discourse, could not help laughing; and, as we were alone, took the purse without ceremony, saying, while he dismissed me, " Go, Signior Sidy Hali; you have done well to inter with pomp and honor a dog who had so much consideration for persons of worth."

By these means I extricated myself out of this affair, which, if it did not make me more wise, rendered me at least more circumspect for the future. I no longer drank with the Arabian, nor even with the Jew; but chose for a companion in my cups, a young gentleman of Leghorn, called Azarini, who was my own slave. I was not like the rest of the renegadoes, who are generally more cruel to slaves than the Turks themselves; all my captives waited very patiently for their redemption: and, indeed, I treated them so gently, that sometimes they told me, they were more afraid of changing their master, than desirous of liberty, whatever charms it has for people in a state of bondage.

One day the Dey's vessels returned with consi-

derable prizes, bringing in more than an hundred slaves of both sexes, whom they had taken on the coasts of Spain. Solyman kept but a very small number, and the rest were exposed to sale. I arrived in the market-place, and bought a Spanish girl, about ten or twelve years old, who wept bitterly, and seemed in despair. I was surprised to see one of her age so sensible of captivity; and bid her, in Castilian, moderate her affliction; assuring her that she had fallen into the hands of a master who did not want humanity, though he wore a turban. The young creature, whose mind was still engrossed by her sorrow, did not hear what I said: she did nothing but sob, complain of her fate, and, from time to time, cry with a piteous accent, "O my mother! why are we separated?" In pronouncing these words, she turned her eyes towards a woman between forty and fifty years of age, who stood a few paces from her, and, with a downcast look, waited in sullen silence until somebody should purchase her. I asked the young girl, if the person she looked at was her mother? "Yes, alas! Signior," she replied: "in the name of God, do not part us." "Well, my child," said I, "if it is necessary for your consolation that you should be together, you shall soon be satisfied." At the same time I approached the mother, in order to bid for her: but I no sooner beheld her face, than I recollected, with all the emotion you can imagine, the features, the individual countenance of Lucinda!" "Just heaven!"

said I to myself, " 'tis my own mother! 'tis doubtless she herself!" As for her, whether the deep affliction occasioned by her misfortunes made all the objects that surrounded her appear to her as enemies, or that my dress disguised me, or rather that I was so much altered in twelve years, during which time she had not seen me, I know not, but she did not at all remember me.

Having bought her also, I carried them both to my house, where, designing to give them the pleasure of knowing who I was, " Madam," said I to Lucinda, " is it possible that my features do not strike you? Have my whiskers and turban disguised me so much, that you do not know your son Raphael!" My mother, starting at these words, considered my countenance, recollected me, and we embraced one another with great tenderness. I then embraced her daughter, who, perhaps, knew no more of having a brother, than I of having a sister. " Confess," said I to my mother, " that in all your theatrical pieces, you have not a recognization so original as this." " Son," answered she, sighing, " I was at first rejoiced to see you again; but now my joy is converted into grief. In what a situation, alas! do I find you! My slavery gives me a thousand times less pain than that odious dress." " In good faith, madam," said I, interrupting her with a laugh, " I admire your delicacy, which to be sure is very commendable in an actress. Why, good God! mother, you must be greatly altered, if my metamorphosis

offends you so much: instead of finding fault with my turban, look upon me rather as an actor who plays the part of a Turk upon the stage. Though I am a renegado, I am no more a Mussulman now than when I was in Spain; and at bottom I feel myself still attached to my religion. When you shall know the adventures that have happened to me in this country, you will excuse my conduct. Love was my crime, and I sacrifice to that deity: I am somewhat of your disposition, I assure you. There is still another reason," added I, "which ought to moderate your displeasure in seeing me thus situated. You expected to suffer in Algiers a rigorous captivity; and you find in your master a son, tender, respectful, and rich enough to maintain you here in abundance, until we can lay hold of an occasion of returning certainly into Spain. So that you must allow that proverb to be true, which says, "It is an ill wind that blows no body good."

"Son," said Lucinda to me, "since you design to repass one day into your own country, and there abjure the religion of Mahomet, I am comforted. Thank heaven!" continued she, "that I shall be able to carry back your sister Beatrice safe and sound into Castile." "Yes, madam," cried I, "you shall have it in your power: we will go all three together as soon as possible, and rejoin the rest of our family; for I suppose you have more marks of your fruitfulness in Spain." "No!" said my mother; "I have no other chil-

dren than you two; and you must know that Beatrice is the fruit of lawful wedlock." "Why," I resumed, "did you give my little sister that advantage over me? How could you resolve to marry? I have heard you say an hundred times, during my childhood, that you could not forgive a handsome woman for taking a husband." "Every season has its reason, my son," she replied: "Men of the most firm resolution are apt to change; and would you have a woman be more constant? I will," added she, recount my history after you left Madrid." Then she made the following narration, which, as it is curious, I will favor you with.

"If you remember it," said my mother, "you quitted young Leganez about thirteen years ago: at that time the Duke of Medina Celi told me, that he would come and sup with me in private some evening: he appointed the day, when I waited for that nobleman, who came accordingly, and I had the good fortune to please him. He demanded the sacrifice of all the rivals he might have. I granted his request, in hopes of being well paid for my condescension; and my hopes were not disappointed; for, the very next day I received from him considerable presents, which were followed by many more during the course of our correspondence. I was afraid that I should not be able to detain a man of such high rank a long time in my fetters; and this I dreaded the more, because I knew very well that he had

escaped from some celebrated beauties, whose chains he had broke almost as soon as he had bore them. Nevertheless, far from being every day less and less pleased with my favors, his raptures seemed rather to increase: in short, I had the art to amuse him, and hinder his heart, naturally inconstant, from giving way to its usual levity.

"He had been attached to me already three months, and I had room to flatter myself that his passion would be of long duration; when one of my she-friends and I went to an assembly, where he happened to be with his duchess, in order to hear a concert of vocal and instrumental music. We chanced to place ourselves pretty near the duchess, who was pleased to take it amiss that I should presume to appear in a place where she was, and sent a message to me by one of her women, desiring that I would immediately withdraw. I returned an insolent answer, which incensed the duchess so much, that she complained of it to her husband, who came to me in person, and said, "Retire, Lucinda: though noblemen of my rank attach themselves to such little creatures as you, they must not forget themselves altogether: if we love you more than our wives, we honor our wives more than you; and as often as you have the insolence to put yourselves in competition with them, you will always have the mortification to be treated with indignity."

"Luckily for me, the duke spoke this in a tone of voice so low, that not one word was overheard

by the people around us. I withdrew, covered with shame, and wept with vexation for the affront I had received. To crown my confusion, the actors and actresses got notice of the adventure that very evening. One would think these people entertain a demon, who delights in reporting to one whatever happens to another. If an actor, for example, is guilty of some extravagant action in a debauch, or an actress enters into articles with a rich gallant, the company is immediately informed of the circumstance. All my comrades, therefore, knew what happened at the concert, and God knows how they rejoiced at my expense. A spirit of charity, which reigns among them, usually manifests itself on these occasions. I put myself, however, above their tittle-tattle, and consoled myself for the loss of the Duke de Medina Celi, for he visited me no more; and I learned a few days after, that a Carthusian nun had made a conquest of him.

"When a lady belonging to the theatre has the good fortune to be in vogue, she cannot want lovers; and the passion of a grandee, though it does not last above three days, greatly enhances her price. I found myself besieged with adorers, as soon as it was known in Madrid that the Duke had forsaken me. Those rivals whom I had sacrificed to him, more captivated by my charms than ever, returned in crowds as candidates for my favor. I received homage from a thousand other hearts, and was never so much in fashion

before. Of all the men who courted my graces, a fat German, gentleman to the Duke d'Ossuna, seemed the most eager. He had not a very amiable person, but attracted my attention by a thousand pistoles, which he had amassed in the service of his master, and which he squandered away, in order to be deemed worthy of being in the list of my happy gallants. As long as this worthy admirer, whose name was Brutandorf, had money to spend, I gave him a favorable reception; but when he was ruined, he found my door always shut against him. This proceeding of mine displeased him, and he came to search for me at the theatre during the play. He found me behind the scenes, and began to reproach me for my ingratitude. I laughed in his face, at which he was enraged, and gave me a box on the ear, like a blunt German as he was. I shrieked aloud, interrupted the representation, appeared upon the stage, and, addressing myself to the Duke d'Ossuna, who was present with the duchess his lady, demanded justice for the German behaviour of his gentleman. The duke ordered us to go on with the play, and said he would hear the parties when we had finished the piece. As soon as it was over, I presented myself, in a good deal of emotion, before the duke, and signified my grievance in a pathetic manner. As for the German, he employed but a few words in his defence: he said, 'That, far from repenting what he had done, he would do it again on the same provocation." Both parties

being heard, the Duke d'Ossuna said to my adversary, 'Brutandorf, I dismiss you from my service; let me never see your face again. Not that I mind your having struck an actress, but am offended at your want of respect to your master and mistress, by presuming to disturb the entertainment in their presence.'

"This sentence I could not digest. I was mortally piqued, because the German had not been turned away on account of his insolence to me. I imagined that such an affront put upon an actress, ought to have been as severely punished as petty treason; and I had laid my account with seeing the gentleman undergo some terrible infliction. This disagreeable event undeceived, and convinced me, that the world always makes a distinction between the players and the characters they represent. I was, for this reason, disgusted with the stage, which I resolved to abandon, and go to live at a great distance from Madrid. I accordingly chose the city of Valencia for the place of my retreat, and thither I repaired incognito, with the value of twenty thousand ducats, in jewels and cash: a fortune, as I thought, sufficient to maintain me during the rest of my days, since I designed to lead a very retired life. I took a small house at Valencia, and had no other domestics than a maid-servant and a page, to whom I was as little known as to the whole city. I pretended to be the widow of an officer of the king's household; and said, I came to settle at Valencia, because it

had the reputation of being one of the most agreeable places in Spain. I saw but very little company; and observed such a regular conduct, that I was never suspected of having been an actress. In spite of my care, however, to keep myself concealed, I attracted the notice of a gentleman, who had a country-house near Paterna. He was a very well-made cavalier, between thirty-five and forty years of age, but withal a nobleman very much in debt; which is no great rarity in the kingdom of Valencia, more than in other countries.

"This Signior Hidalgo,* finding my person to his liking, wanted to know if I could answer his purpose in other respects: for this end, he uncoupled his spies to make discoveries, and had the pleasure to learn from their report, that, besides some share of beauty, I was a widow of good fortune. He looked upon me, therefore, as a suitable match; and, in a little time, an honest old gentlewoman came to my house, and told me, from him, that, being equally charmed with my beauty and virtue, he made a tender of his heart, and was ready to conduct me to the altar, as soon as I would favor him with my hand. I asked three days to deliberate upon his proposal, and inform myself of his character; which was so engaging, that, although I was not ignorant of his situation, I easily determined to marry him in a short time after.

* Hidalgo, in Spanish, is a gentleman; literally somebody's son' in contradistinction to those who are the sons of nobody.

"Don Manuel de Xercia (so was my husband called) carried me immediately to his castle, that had a very antique air, of which he was not a little vain. He pretended that one of his ancestors had caused it to be built; and from thence concluded that there was not a more ancient house in Spain than that of Xercia. But this title of nobility, fair as it was, had like to have been destroyed by time; for the castle, which they were obliged to prop up in several parts, threatened immediate ruin. How happy, therefore, was Don Manuel in marrying me! more than half my money was employed in reparations; and the rest served to put us in a condition of making a figure in the country. Behold me then (to use the expression) in a new world, changed into the nymph of a castle, and lady of a parish. Here was a metamorphosis! and I was too good an actress, not to support, with dignity, the splendor with which I was invested by my rank. I assumed lofty theatrical airs, which made the village conceive an high idea of my birth. How merry would they have been at my expense, had they known the truth of the matter! The nobility in the neighbourhood would have bestowed upon me a thousand taunts, and the peasants abated a great deal of the respect they showed me.

I had lived happily near six years with Don Manuel, when he died, leaving my affairs in great perplexity, with your sister Beatrice, then going in her fifth year. The castle, which was all we had, was unluckily engaged to several creditors, the

chief of whom was one Bernard Astuto,* whose name seemed very well adapted to his character: he practised at Valencia the business of an attorney, which he exercised with consummate skill, having studied the law, in order to qualify himself for cheating with the greater dexterity. What a terrible creditor he was! a castle under the claws of such an attorney is like a pigeon in the talons of a kite. Accordingly, Signior Astuto, as soon as he understood the death of my husband, did not fail to besiege the castle, which he would undoubtedly have blown up by the mines which chicanery began to prepare, had not my good genius interposed, and ordered it so, as that my besieger became my slave. I had the good fortune to captivate him, during an interview we had on the subject of the law-suit. I spared nothing, I own, to inspire him with a passion for me: the desire of saving my land made me practise upon him all those languishing airs which had often succeeded so well. Notwithstanding all my art, I was afraid of being baffled by the attorney, who was so ingulphed in business, that he did not seem susceptible of an amorous impression. Nevertheless, this sullen aukward scrawler took more pleasure in looking at me than I imagined. "Madam," said he, "I know not how to make love: I have already applied to my profession so closely as to neglect the methods and customs of gallantry; but, however,

* Astuto is a Spanish word, signifying craft or cunning.

I am not ignorant of the essential part; and, therefore, to come to the point, I assure you, that if you will give me your hand, we will burn the whole proceedings: I will bubble the other creditors who join in the suit against you: you shall enjoy the life-rent, and your daughter the property of the land." My own interest, and that of Beatrice, did not permit me to hesitate; I accepted the proposal, and the attorney kept his promise. He turned his arms against the rest of the creditors, and secured me in the possession of my castle: and this, perhaps, was the first time of his having befriended the widow and the orphan.

"I became, therefore, an attorney's wife, without ceasing to be lady of the parish. But this new marriage cost me the esteem of the gentry in Valencia. The women of fashion looked upon me as one who had degenerated, and therefore would not visit me; so that I was obliged to confine myself to an acquaintance among citizens; a circumstance that gave me some uneasiness at first, because I had been for six years accustomed to correspond with none but ladies of distinction: but I soon consoled myself, and became acquainted with the wives of a scrivener and two attornies, whose characters were pleasant enough; there was something ridiculous in their behaviour, that diverted me very much. These small gentry believed themselves ladies of some consideration. "Alas!" said I, sometimes to myself, when I saw them forget themselves, "this is the way of the world; every

one thinks herself better than her neighbour. I wish that, by way of punishment, they were obliged to keep in their houses the pictures of their grandfathers: in good faith, they would not place them in the most remarkable apartment."

"After having been married four years, Signior Bernardo Astuto fell sick, and died without children; so that, with what he had settled upon me at our marriage, and the money I was left in possession of, I found myself a rich widow, and had the reputation of being so. On this report, a Sicilian gentleman, whose name was Colifichini, resolved to attach himself to me, in order to ruin or espouse me; for he left me the choice. He had come from Palermo to see Spain, and, after having satisfied his curiosity, waited (as he said) at Valencia, for an opportunity of repassing into Sicily. This gentleman was not more than five-and-twenty years of age, genteelly shaped, though small: in short, I liked his appearance. He found means to speak with me in private; and I will frankly own, that I became madly fond of him in our first interview. On his side, the little rogue seemed quite captivated by my charms; and I believe, God forgive me, we should have married one another immediately, had the attorney's death, which was still recent, permitted me to contract a new engagement so soon: but, ever since I had fallen into the state of matrimony, I maintained the punctilios of decorum.

We agreed, therefore, to defer our marriage

for some time, out of decency. In the mean time Colifichini continued his addresses, and his passion, far from abating, seemed to increase daily. The poor young man was not very well provided with cash; I perceived it, and he no longer wanted money; for, besides that I was almost twice his age, I remembered that I had lain the men under contribution in my youth, and I looked upon what I now did as a restitution that acquitted my conscience. We waited as patiently as we could for the expiration of the time prescribed by custom for women to remain in a state of widowhood; and then went to the altar, where we mutually bound ourselves in the indissoluble ties of wedlock. We afterwards retired to my castle, where, I may say, we lived two years, not so much like husband and wife, as two tender lovers. But, alas! we were not destined to be long happy in one another; a fatal pleurisy robbed me of my dear Colifichini."

Here I interrupted my mother, crying, "How! madam; your third husband dead too! you must certainly be a very dangerous tenement." "What could I do, son?" answered Lucinda. "Was it in my power to prolong the days that heaven had numbered? If I have lost three husbands, I could not help it. Two of them I regretted very much. He for whom I had the least regard was the attorney: as I married him out of interest, I easily consoled myself for his death. But," added she, "to return to Colifichini, I must tell you, that a few months after his decease, having a mind to

go and see, with my own eyes, a country-house near Palermo, which he had assigned to me as a jointure in our contract of marriage, I embarked with my daughter for Sicily; but we were taken in our passage by the vessels of the Dey of Algiers, and conducted into this city. Happily for us you chanced to be on the spot where we were put up to sale, otherwise we might have fallen into the hands of some barbarous master, who would have maltreated us, and under whom we might have passed our whole life in bondage, without your knowing any thing of the matter."

Such was my mother's narration; after which, gentlemen, I gave her the best apartment of my house, with the liberty of living as she should think proper; a permission that she relished very much. She had contracted such a habit of being in love, from the repeated attacks of that passion, that she must absolutely have either a husband or a gallant. At first she cast her eyes on some of my slaves; but Haly Pegelin, a Greek renegado, who came frequently to the house, soon engrossed her attention. She conceived a more violent passion for him than ever she felt for Colifichini; and she was so much mistress of the art of pleasing, that she found the secret of charming him also. I winked at their intelligence, and thought of nothing then but my return into Spain. The Dey having already permitted me to fit out a vessel, to cruise and commit piracy, I was busied in making preparations; and eight days before they were

finished, said to Lucinda, "Madam, we shall depart from Algiers in a very little time, and lose sight of that place which you detest so much."

My mother grew pale at these words, and remained speechless: at which being strangely surprised, "What do I see, madam!" said I: "what is the meaning of that consternation in your looks? You seem to be afflicted, rather than rejoiced, at what I tell you! I thought I should have made you happy with the news of every thing's being ready for our departure. Have you no longer any desire then of repassing into Spain?" "None at all, son," answered my mother. "I have had so much affliction in that kingdom that I renounce it for ever." "What do I hear!" cried I, in a transport of grief. "Ah! say rather, that love detaches you from it. O heaven! what a change is here! When you arrived in this city, every object that presented itself was odious to your eyes; but Haly Pegelin has altered your disposition." "I do not deny it," replied Lucinda: "I love that renegado, whom I design to take for my fourth husband." "What an abandoned project!" said I, interrupting her with horror. "Would you marry a Mussulman? You forget that you are a Christian; or rather, you never was one but in name. Ah! mother, what are you about to do? You have resolved upon your own perdition, by voluntarily embracing that which I was compelled to do by necessity."

I used many more arguments to dissuade her

from her design; but I harangued to no purpose: she had formed her resolution; and not contented with following her own wicked inclination, and quitting me to live with that renegado, she wanted to carry Beatrice along with her also; but this I opposed. "Ah, wretched Lucinda!" said I to her, "if nothing is able to restrain you, at least abandon yourself only to the fury that possesses your imagination; do not drag a young innocent creature to the precipice from whence you intend to throw yourself." Lucinda went away without making any reply; and I believed that a remaining ray of reason enlightened and hindered her from being obstinate in demanding her daughter. But how little was I acquainted with my mother! Two days after, one of my slaves said to me, "Signior, take care of yourself; one of Pegelin's captives has imparted a thing to me, of which you cannot take advantage too soon. Your mother has changed her religion; and, to punish you for having refused to let her carry off Beatrice, is resolved to inform the Dey of your intended flight." I did not doubt one moment that Lucinda was capable of doing what my slave mentioned. I had had opportunities of studying the lady, and perceived that, by the habit of acting sanguinary parts in tragedies, she was so familiarised to guilt, that she could have caused me to be burnt alive; and I believe, would have been no more affected with my death, than with the catastrophe of a dramatic performance.

Willing, therefore, not to neglect the advice of my slave, I hastened the embarkation; hired Turks, according to the custom of the corsairs of Algiers, when they go on a cruise; but I hired no more than such as were necessary to keep me unsuspected, and set sail as soon as possible with all my slaves, and my sister Beatrice. You may well believe that I did not forget to carry off, at the same time, all my jewels and money, which might amount to the value of six thousand ducats. When we got to sea, we began by securing the Turks, whom we easily chained, because my slaves were more numerous than they; and we had such a favorable wind, that in a little time we made the coast of Italy, and arrived, without the least bad accident, in the harbour of Leghorn, where, I believe, the whole city crowded to see us come ashore. The father of my slave Azarini being among the spectators, by accident or curiosity, surveyed all the captives with great attention, as they disembarked; but though he sought among them the features of his son, he little expected to see him again. What transports and embraces were the consequence of their meeting, when they recollected one another!

As soon as Azarini had told his father who I was, and what brought me to Leghorn, the old man obliged me as well as Beatrice to lodge at his house. I shall pass over in silence the detail of a thousand things that I was obliged to perform in being re-admitted into the bosom of the church;

and only observe, that I abjured Mahometism much more heartily than I had embraced it. After having entirely purged myself of the gall of Algiers, I sold my vessel, and set all my slaves at liberty. As for the Turks, they were detained in prison at Leghorn, in order to be exchanged for Christians. I received the best of treatment from both the Azarinis, the younger of whom married my sister Beatrice, who was indeed no bad match for him, being a gentleman's daughter, and heiress of the castle of Xercia, which my mother had taken care to farm out to a rich peasant of Paterna, when she resolved upon her passage into Sicily.

Having stayed some time at Leghorn, I set out for Florence, which I longed much to see; and whither I did not go without letters of recommendation. Azarini, the father, had friends at the Grand Duke's court, to whom he recommended me as a Spanish gentleman, his ally; and I prefixed Don to my name; imitating in that a great many Spanish plebeians, who, when they are out of their own country, assume that title of honor without ceremony. I boldly, therefore, called myself Don Raphael; and, as I had brought from Algiers a sufficiency to support my dignity, appeared at court in a splendid manner. The gentleman to whom Azarini had wrote in my favor, gave out that I was a person of quality; so that his testimony, together with the airs I assumed, made me easily pass for a man of importance. I soon got acquainted with the principal noblemen,

who presented me to the Grand Duke, whom I had the good fortune to please; upon which, I bent my whole endeavour to make my court to that prince, and study his disposition. I listened attentively to what the oldest courtiers said to him; and by their discourse discovered his inclinations. Among other things, I observed that he loved raillery, good stories, and sallies of wit. I modelled myself accordingly; and every morning marked in my pocket-book the stories I designed for the day. I had such a number of them in my memory, that my budget might be said to have been full; and yet, in spite of all my management, it was emptied apace in such a manner, that I should either have been obliged to use repetition, or show that I was at the end of my apophthegms; if my genius, fruitful in fiction, had not furnished me with abundance. But I composed tales of gallantry and humor, that were very entertaining to the Grand Duke; and as it often happens with professed wits, in the morning I invented bright expressions, which I uttered as unpremeditated sallies in the afternoon.

I even elevated myself into a poet, and consecrated my muse to the praise of the prince. I freely own indeed, that my verse was none of the best, therefore not much criticised: but had it been better, I question if it would have been better received by the Grand Duke, who seemed very well satisfied with my talents; the matter, perhaps, hindering him from finding fault. Be that as it

will, this prince insensibly took such a liking to me, as gave umbrage to the courtiers. They endeavoured to discover who I was, but did not succeed. Getting notice, however, that I had been a renegado, they did not fail to inform the prince of it, in hopes of injuring my character. But this they could not accomplish; on the contrary, the Grand Duke one day obliged me to give him a faithful narration of my voyage to Algiers; I obeyed, and my adventures, which I did not at all disguise, afforded him infinite pleasure.

"Don Raphael," said he, when I had finished the relation, "I have a regard for you, and will give you a mark of it, which will not permit you to doubt of my friendship. I will make you the depository of my secrets; and to begin with an instance of my confidence, I must tell you that I am in love with the wife of one of my ministers. She is the most amiable lady of my court, but, at the same time, the most virtuous: shut up amidst her family, and solely attached to a husband whom she adores, she seems ignorant of the noise her charms make in Florence. Judge you if this must not be a difficult conquest. Nevertheless, this beauty, inaccessible as she is to lovers, has deigned sometimes to hear my sighs: I have found means to speak to her in private, and acquaint her with the sentiments of my heart; but I do not flatter myself with the hope of having inspired her with mutual love: she has never given me cause to form such an agreeable idea. I do not, however,

despair of pleasing her by my assiduity, and the mysterious conduct I shall take care to observe.

"My passion for that lady," added he, "is known to nobody but herself: for, instead of consulting my inclination without constraint, and acting the sovereign, I conceal the knowledge of my flame from all the world; a piece of delicacy which I think I owe to Mascarini, the husband of her I love: his zeal, attachment, services, and probity, oblige me to conduct myself with great secrecy and circumspection. I would not plunge a dagger into the bosom of that unhappy husband, by declaring myself the lover of his wife; but wish that he may always remain ignorant if possible of the flame that consumes me; for I am persuaded that he would die of grief, if he knew of the confidence I now repose in you. I conceal my steps, therefore, and am resolved to make use of you, in expressing to Lucretia all the pangs I suffer, by the constraint which she imposes upon me. You shall be the interpreter of my sentiments, and I do not at all doubt that you will acquit yourself of the commission to a miracle. Contract an acquaintance with Mascarini; endeavour to gain his friendship; insinuate yourself into his house, and procure the liberty of conversing with his wife. This is what I expect of you, and what I assure myself you will perform with all the discretion and address that such a delicate employment requires."

I promised to do all that lay in my power to justify the confidence he honored me with, and

contribute to the success of his flame; and soon kept my word with him: I spared nothing to please Mascarini, and accomplished my end with ease. Charmed to find his friendship courted by a man who was beloved of his prince, he met my advances half way: his house was open to me; I had free access to his lady; and, I dare say, behaved myself so well, that he had not the least suspicion of the negociation entrusted to my care. It is true, indeed, for an Italian, he was not much addicted to jealousy: he depended upon the virtue of Lucretia, and shutting himself up in his closet, left me frequently alone with her. I went roundly to work, the very first opportunity; entertained the lady with the passion of the Grand Duke, and told her that my sole design in coming to her house, was to talk to her of that prince. She did not seem captivated by him; and yet I perceived that her vanity hindered her from rejecting his addresses: she took pleasure in hearing them, without feeling any inclination to answer his desires. She did not want understanding; but she was a woman, and I observed that her virtue yielded insensibly to the superb idea of having a sovereign in her chains. In short, the prince had reason to flatter himself, that, without employing the violence of a Tarquin, he would see Lucretia subjected to his love. An accident, however, which he little expected, destroyed his hope, as you shall presently hear.

I am naturally impudent among women, having

acquired that qualification (I know not whether it be good or bad) among the Turks. Lucretia was handsome; and I, forgetting that I was only to act the part of an ambassador, talked to her on my own score, offering my services with all the gallantry I was master of. Instead of being shocked at my audaciousness, and replying in a rage, she said, with a smile, "You must own, Don Raphael, that the Grand Duke has made chóice of a very faithful and zealous minister, who serves him with integrity never enough to be commended." "Madam," said I, with the same air, "do not let us examine these things scrupulously; but lay aside those reflections, which I know very well are not at all favorable to me. I abandon myself to my passion; and, after all, do not believe myself the first confidant of a prince, who has betrayed his master in affairs of gallantry; for the great have often dangerous rivals in their messengers of pleasure." "That may be," replied Lucretia; "but, for my part, I am so high-spirited, that nobody under the degree of a prince shall ever make an impression upon my heart. Conduct yourself accordingly," added she, growing serious; "and let us change the discourse. I am willing to forget what you have said, on condition that you shall never talk to me again in the same manner; otherwise you may chance to repent it."

Although this was an advice to the reader of which I ought to have taken the advantage, I did not leave off entertaining Mascarini's wife with

my passion; I even pressed her with more ardor than ever, to make suitable returns to my tenderness, and was rash enough to take liberties. Upon which the lady being affronted at my discourse and Mussulman behaviour, checked me abruptly, threatened to make the Grand Duke acquainted with my insolence, and assured me, that she would desire him to punish me as I deserved. I was piqued in my turn at these menaces: my love changed into hate; and I determined to be revenged upon Lucretia for her contempt. I went in quest of her husband, whom, after he had sworn that he would not expose me, I informed of the correspondence between his wife and the prince; not forgetting to paint her very amorous, in order to make the scene more interesting. The minister, to prevent all accidents, shut up his spouse, without any other form of process, in a secret apartment, where she was guarded by people on whom he could rely. While she was thus surrounded by spies, who hindered her from informing the Grand Duke of her situation, I told that prince with a melancholy air, that he must no more think of Lucretia; that Mascarini had, doubtless, discovered the whole affair, since he had taken it into his head to watch his wife; that I could not imagine what had alarmed his suspicion of me, for I thought I had always behaved with a great deal of address; that the lady, perhaps, had confessed the whole to her husband, in concert with whom she had allowed herself to be locked up, in order to

avoid those importunities which alarmed her virtue. The prince seemed very much afflicted at my report; I was touched with his grief, and repented more than once of what I had done; but it was too late; besides, I confess that I felt a malicious joy, when I represented to myself the condition to which I had reduced the proud woman who had disdained my passion.

I enjoyed with impunity the pleasure of revenge, which is so sweet to all the world, and in particular to Spaniards, when the Grand Duke, being one day in company with five or six of his courtiers and me, said, "In what manner do you think a man ought to be punished, who has dared to abuse the confidence of his prince, and attempted to deprive him of his mistress?" "He ought," said one, "to be tied to the tail of four horses, and torn to pieces." Another was of opinion that he should be mawled to death. The least cruel of those Italians, and he whose sentence was most favorable to the delinquent, said, "That he would be satisfied with causing him to be thrown from the top of a high tower." "And what is the opinion of Don Raphael?" resumed the Grand Duke: "I am persuaded that the Spaniards are as severe as the Italians in such conjunctures."

I easily comprehended, as you may believe, that Mascarini had not kept his oath; or that his wife had found means to apprise the prince of what had passed between her and me; and my confusion appeared plain on my countenance.

Nevertheless, disconcerted as I was, I answered with a resolute tone, "Sir, the Spaniards are more generous: they would pardon the confidant on such an occasion, and, by their goodness, raise in his soul an eternal regret for having betrayed them." "Well," said the prince, "I find myself capable of such generosity. I pardon the traitor; for I have none but myself to blame for having bestowed my confidence on a man whom I did not know, and whom I had reason to distrust, after what I had heard of his character. Don Raphael," added he, "this is the manner in which I avenge myself: quit my dominions immediately, and let me never see your face again." I withdrew on the instant; not so much afflicted at my disgrace, as rejoiced at coming off so cheaply; and the very next day embarked in a vessel that sailed from Leghorn, on its return to Barcelona."

I interrupted Don Raphael in this part of his history, by saying, "For a man of understanding, methinks you committed a great blunder in neglecting to leave Florence immediately after the discovery you made to Mascarini of the prince's passion for Lucretia; you should have concluded that the Grand Duke would soon come to the knowledge of your infidelity." "I grant it," replied the son of Lucinda; "and, notwithstanding the assurance which the minister gave me of not exposing me to the resentment of the prince, I proposed to disappear in a very short time.

I arrived at Barcelona," continued he, "with

the remainder of the wealth I had brought from Algiers, the best part of which I had dissipated at Florence, in the character of a Spanish gentleman. I did not stay long in Catalonia; for, having a longing inclination to revisit Madrid, the charming place of my nativity, I satisfied, as soon as possible, the desire that impelled me. When I arrived in that city, I took furnished lodgings, by accident, at a house where a lady lived, whose name was Camilla, and who, though no minor, was a very engaging creature. I take Signior Gil Blas to witness, who saw her much about that time at Valladolid. She had still more wit than beauty; and never had a she-adventurer better talents for decoying dupes: but she was none of those coquettes who lay up the acknowledgments of their gallants: when she had pillaged a man of business, she shared his spoils with the first sharper she found to her liking.

We loved one another at first sight; and the conformity of our manners joined us so closely, that we soon had every thing in common. Our fortunes, indeed, were not very considerable, and therefore we spent them in a very little time. Neither of us, unluckily, minded any thing but our pleasure, or made the least use of the talents we had to live at our neighbour's expense. But misery at last awakened our geniuses, which pleasure had benumbed: and Camilla said to me, "My dear Raphael, let us make a diversion, my friend, and renounce a fidelity that ruins us both: you may

captivate a rich widow, and I may charm some nobleman: for if we continue faithful to one another, here will be two fortunes lost." "Fair Camilla," I replied, "you have anticipated me; I was going to make the same proposal to you. I assent to your scheme, my queen: yes, for the better support of our mutual flame, let us attempt advantageous conquests: the infidelities we shall commit will turn to triumphs in the end."

This convention being made, we took the field, and made considerable motions at first, without being able to encounter what we sought: Camilla could light upon none but beaux; that is to say, gallants who had not a penny in their pockets: and I could meet with no women, but such as loved better to levy contributions than to pay them. As our arts were useless in love, we had recourse to stratagems, and performed so many, that our fame reached the ears of the corregidor; and that severe judge for the devil, ordered one of his alguazils to apprehend us: but this officer, being as good-natured as the other was cruel, gave us time to quit Madrid, in consideration of a small sum which we bestowed upon him. We took the road to Valladolid, and fixed in that city, having hired a house, in which I lived with Camilla, who passed for my sister, to avoid scandal. At first we kept our industry under the rein, and began to study the ground before we should form any enterprise.

One day a man accosting me in the street, sa-

luted me very civilly, saying, "Signior Don Raphael, do you know me?" I answered, "No." Upon which he resumed, "But I recollect you: I have seen you at the court of Tuscany, where I then belonged to the Grand Duke's guards. I quitted the service of that prince some months ago, and am come to Spain with an Italian of great finesse: we have been three weeks at Valladolid, and lodge with a Castilian and Gallician, who are, without contradiction, two young fellows of honor. We live together by the work of our hands, make good cheer, and amuse ourselves like princes: if you will join us, you shall be agreeably received by my confederates: for you always seemed to me to be a gallant man, of a disposition not addicted to scruples, and a professed brother of our order."

The rogue's frankness excited mine. "Since you speak to me with so little reserve," said I to him, "it is but reasonable that I should explain myself in the same manner to you. Indeed, I am not a novice in your profession; and if my modesty would allow me to recount my exploits, you would see that you have not judged too advantageously of my talents: but I will forbear to launch out in my own praise, and content myself with assuring you, while I accept that place in your company which is offered, that I will neglect nothing to approve myself worthy of your choice." As soon as I signified to this ambidexter my consent to augment the number of his comrades, he

conducted me to the place where they were, and introduced me to their acquaintance. It was here that I saw, for the first time, the illustrious Ambrose de Lamela. Those gentlemen examined me touching my skill in the mystery of appropriating to one's self with address the effects of another. They wanted to know if I understood the principles of their art; but I showed them a great many stratagems which they did not know, and which acquired their admiration of my ability. They were still more astonished, when, despising the dexterity of my hand, as a thing too common, I told them that I excelled in tricks which required the assistance of genius. To convince them of this, I recounted the adventure of Jerome de Moyadas; and, upon the simple narration of that affair, they found me such a superior genius, that I was chosen their chief by unanimous consent. I soon justified their choice by an infinite number of knavish designs, which we put in practice, and of which I was, as it were, the informing soul. When we had occasion for an actress to carry on our projects, we made use of Camilla, who performed all her parts to admiration.

About that time, our brother Ambrose, being tempted to revisit his native country, set out for Gallicia, assuring us, that we might depend upon his return. He satisfied his desire; and on his way back again, going to Burgos, with an intention of striking some stroke, an innkeeper of his acquaintance introduced him into the service of

Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, with whose affairs he did not fail to make himself acquainted. Signior Gil Blas," he added, addressing himself to me, "you know how we rid you of your portmanteau, in our furnished lodging at Valladolid; and I do not doubt but you suspected Ambrose of being the chief instrument of that theft; and you was in the right: for, at your arrival, he came and laid your situation before us, and we, the gentlemen undertakers, regulated ourselves accordingly. But you are ignorant of the consequences of that adventure, which I will, therefore, let you know. Ambrose and I carried off your portmanteau, and, mounting your mules, took the road to Madrid, without incumbering ourselves with Camilla, or the rest of our comrades, who, without doubt, were as much surprised as you at our non-appearance next day.

On the second day we changed our design; and, instead of going to Madrid, which I had not quitted without cause, we passed by Zeberos, and continued our route as far as Toledo. In this city, our first care was to dress ourselves like gentlemen; then giving ourselves out for two brothers of Gallicia, who travelled out of curiosity, we soon became acquainted with persons of character. As I had been so much accustomed to act the man of quality, I was easily mistaken for such; and people being usually dazzled by expense, we imposed upon every body by the gallant treats we began to give to the ladies. Among the women whom I visited,

there was one who touched my heart: I found her fairer than Camilla, and a good deal more young: I was desirous of knowing who she was, and learned that her name was Violante; and that her husband was a gentleman, who, cloyed already with her charms, pursued those of a courtezan whom he loved. This piece of information was enough to determine me to establish Violante the sovereign lady of my affection.

It was not long before she perceived her conquest: I began to follow her every where, and commit a thousand impertinences, to persuade her that I wanted nothing more than to console her for the infidelity of her spouse. The fair one made her reflections on the matter, which were such, that at last I had the pleasure of knowing the approbation of her sentiments. I received from her a billet, in answer to several which I had sent her, by one of those old matrons who are so serviceable in Spain and Italy. The lady gave me to understand, that her husband supped every evening with his mistress, and did not come home before it was very late. The same night I went under the windows of Violante, and entered into a most tender conversation with her: after which we agreed at parting, to enjoy the same opportunity every night at the same hour, without prejudice to the other acts of gallantry which we should be permitted to exercise in the day.

Hitherto Don Balthazar, the husband of my princess, came off very cheaply: but I chose to

love naturally, and repaired one evening under the lady's windows, with a design to tell her, that I could live no longer, if I did not enjoy a tête-a-tête with her in a place more suitable to the excess of my love; an indulgence which I had not as yet been able to obtain. But just as I got to the place, I saw a man come into the street, who seemed to observe me: in effect, it was the husband, who returned from the courtezan earlier than usual, and who perceiving a cavalier near his house, instead of going in, walked to and fro in the street. I remained for some time unresolved; but, at last, determined to accost Don Balthazar, whom I did not know, and of whom I was also utterly unknown. "Signior cavalier," said I to him, "pray leave the street free to me for one night: I will do as much for you another time." "Signior," he replied, "I was going to make the same request of you. I am in love with a girl whom her brother guards like a dragon, and who lives not above twenty paces from hence, so that I wish there was nobody in the street." "There is one way," said I, "of satisfying us both, without incommoding either; for," added I, showing him his own house, "the lady whom I serve lodges there; and let us assist one another if either of us should be attacked." "With all my heart," he replied: "I will go to my rendezvous, and we will back one another, should there be occasion." So saying, he left me; but it was in order to observe me the

better, and this the darkness of the night permitted him to do with impunity.

As for my part, I approached in security the balcony of Violante, who soon appeared, and we began to converse together. I did not fail to insist upon my queen's granting me a private interview in some particular place. She resisted my importunities a little, to enhance the value of the favor which I demanded; then dropping a letter, which she took out of her pocket, "Hold," said she; "you will find in this billet, the promise of what you so earnestly desire." She afterwards withdrew, because the hour at which her husband usually returned was at hand, upon which I secured the billet, and advanced to the place where Don Balthazar said he was concerned: but he having very well perceived what I wanted with his wife, came to me, saying, "Well, Signior cavalier, you are satisfied with your good fortune?" "I have cause to be so," I replied: "and what have you done? has love favored your addresses?" "Ah no!" said he: "the cursed brother of the beauty whom I love is returned from a country-house, where I imagined he would stay till to-morrow; and this mischance has balked me of the pleasure with which I flattered myself."

Don Balthazar and I made mutual protestations of friendship; and, to tie the knots of it the faster, made an appointment to meet next day in the great square. After we parted, he went home, but mentioned not a word of what he knew to

Violante. Next day he repaired to the great square, where I arriving a moment after him, we saluted one another with demonstrations of friendship, as perfidious on one side as sincere on the other. Then Don Balthazar made me the confidant of a feigned intrigue with the lady whom he had mentioned the preceding night; recounted a long story that he had invented in order to engage me, in my turn, to tell him in what manner I had become acquainted with Violante. I did not fail to fall into the snare, and confess all with the utmost frankness: I even showed the letter which I had received from her, and read the contents in these words:

"I SHALL dine to-morrow with Donna Inez: you know where she lives: it is in the house of that faithful friend that I intend to give you a private interview; for I can no longer refuse that favor which you seem to deserve."

"This," said Don Balthazar, "is a billet which promises you the accomplishment of your wish; I congratulate you beforehand on the happiness that attends you." He could not help being disconcerted while he said this; but he easily concealed his trouble and confusion from me. I was so much engrossed by hope, that I never thought of observing my confidant, who was obliged, however, to leave me, that I might not at last perceive his agitation. He ran to apprise his brother-in-law of

this adventure; but I am ignorant of what passed between them: all I know of the matter is, that Don Balthazar came and knocked at the door while I was with Violante at the house of Donna Inez; and as soon as we learned that it was he, I escaped at the back-door before he came in. As soon as I was gone, the ladies, whom the unforeseen arrival of the husband had disconcerted, recollected themselves, and received him with such effrontery, that he suspected I was either concealed, or had made my escape. I cannot tell what he said to Donna Inez and his wife, because it never came to my knowledge.

Meanwhile, without suspecting that I was Don Balthazar's dupe, I went away, cursing him, and returned to the great square, where I had appointed to meet Lamela. I did not find him, however; he had little affairs of his own to manage, and the rogue was more fortunate than I. While I waited for him, I saw my perfidious confidant arrive, who came up to me with a gay air, and smiling, asked news of my interview with my nymph at the house of Donna Inez. "I do not know," said I, "what demon, jealous of my pleasures, delights in thwarting them: but while I was alone with my lady, pressing her to make me happy, her husband, whom the devil confound! came and knocked at the door: so that being obliged to get off as fast as I could, I retired by a back-door, cursing to hell the troublesome cuckold who broke all my measures." "I am truly sorry for it," cried Don Bal-

thazar, who felt a secret joy in seeing my vexation. "What an impertinent husband must he be! I advise you to give him no quarter." "O! as for that," I replied, "I will take your advice; and I can assure you that his honor shall make its exit this night; his wife, when I left her, bade me not be discouraged at so small a matter; but be sure to come under her window earlier than usual, for she was resolved to admit me into her house; and desired me, at all events, to come attended with two or three friends, for fear of surprise." "What a prudent lady she is!" said he. "I will, if you please, accompany you thither." "Ah, my dear friend," cried I, in a transport of joy, while I threw my arms round his neck, "I am infinitely obliged to you." "I will do more," he resumed: "I am acquainted with a young fellow who is another Cæsar; he shall be of the party, and then you may boldly confide in your escort."

I did not know what acknowledgments to make to this new friend, so much was I charmed with his zeal. In short, I accepted the succour which he offered, and appointing to meet in the twilight under Violante's balcony, we parted for that time. He went to find his brother-in-law, who was the Cæsar in question; and I took a turn till the evening with Lamela, who (though he was surprised at the ardour with which Don Balthazar espoused my interest) disturbed himself no more than I. We fell nodding into the snare, which, I own, was unpardonable in people of our experience. When

I thought it was time to present myself before Violante's window, Ambrose and I appeared upon the spot, armed with good rapiers; and there we found the lady's husband, with another man, waiting for us, without flinching. Don Balthazar accosting me, and showing his brother-in-law, said, " Signior, this is the cavalier whose bravery I extolled so much. Get into the house of your mistress, and let not anxiety hinder you from enjoying the most perfect felicity.

After some mutual compliments, I knocked at my nymph's door, which being opened by a kind of duenna, I entered, and, without taking notice of what passed behind me, advanced into a hall where Violante was. While I saluted the lady, the two traitors who had followed me into the house, and shut the door so hastily after them that Ambrose was left in the street, discovered themselves. You may easily imagine that we then came to blows. Both of them charged me at once; but I found them work enough, and employed them in such a manner, that, perhaps, they repented they had not chosen a surer conveyance for their revenge. I ran the husband through the body; and his brother-in-law seeing him out of the question, got to the door, which the duenna and Violante had opened to make their escape while we were engaged. I pursued them into the street, where I rejoined Lamela, who not being able to extract one word from the women in their flight, did not precisely know what to think of the noise he had

heard. We returned to the tavern where we lodged, secured our most valuable effects, and mounting our mules, rode out of the city without waiting for day.

Knowing very well that this affair might have bad consequences, and that a search would be made at Toledo, which we were in the right to anticipate, we went to bed at Villarubia, at an inn, where, some time after, a merchant of Toledo arrived, in his way to Segorba. As we supped in his company, he recounted the tragical adventure of Violante's husband; and was so far from suspecting us to be concerned, that we boldly asked of him all manner of questions about the affair. "Gentlemen," said he, "just as I set out this morning, I heard of the melancholy accident. Search was made every where for Violante; and I was told that the corregidor, who is related to Don Balthazar, has resolved to spare nothing in discovering the murderers. This is all I know of the matter."

Though I was not much alarmed at the search of the corregidor, I resolved to quit New Castile immediately; reflecting that when Violante should be found, she would confess all; and, on her description of my person to the judge, people would be sent in pursuit of me. For this reason, the very next day, we avoided the highway, through precaution; Lamela being luckily acquainted with three-fourths of Spain, and particularly with the byways through which we could securely repair

into Arragon. Instead of going straight to Cuenca, we kept among the mountains adjacent to that city; and, through paths that were not unknown to my guide, arrived at a grotto which looked very much like an hermitage; and, indeed, it was the same to which you came last night for an asylum.

While I was considering the country around, which presented to my view a most charming rural prospect, my companion said to me, "I passed by this place six years ago, at which time that grotto served as a retreat to an old hermit, who gave me a very charitable reception; entertaining me with a share of his provisions. I remember that he was a very holy man, and harangued me with a discourse that had almost detached me from the world: perhaps he is still alive; I will go and see." So saying, the curious Ambrose alighted from his mule, and entering the hermitage, where having staid some minutes, he returned, calling to me, "Come hither, Don Raphael—come, and see a very affecting scene."

I alighted immediately, and tying our mules to a tree, followed Lamela into the grotto, where I perceived an old anchorite, pale and dying, stretched at his full length upon a truckle-bed. A white beard, very bushy, covered his whole breast; and in his hands, clasped together, appeared a large twisted rosary. At the noise we made at approaching him, he opened his eyes, which death had already begun to close, and, after having looked at us for a moment, said, "Whosoever you are, my

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brethren, profit by the spectacle that now presents itself to your eyes. I have lived forty years in the world, and sixty in this solitude. Ah! how long, at this moment, seems the time which I have bestowed on my pleasures! and, on the contrary, how short does that appear which I have consecrated to penitence and devotion! Alas! I am afraid that the austerities of brother John have not sufficiently expiated the sins of the licentiate Don Juan de Solis."

He had no sooner spoke these words than he expired, leaving us very much affected with his death. These sort of objects always make some impression even on the greatest libertines. But we did not retain it long: we soon forgot what he had said to us, and began to take an inventory of every thing in the hermitage; an employment not very laborious; all his furniture consisting in what you may have observed in the grotto. Brother John was not only ill provided with furniture, but also kept a very bad larder; for all the provision we found, was a few filberts, and some crusts of barley-bread, so hard as to be, in all appearance, proof against the gums of the holy man. I say, his gums; because we observed that he had lost all his teeth. All that this solitary habitation contained, and all that we beheld, made us regard the good anchorite as a perfect saint. We were shocked, indeed, at one thing: we opened a paper, folded in form of a letter, which he had laid upon the table, and in which he begged that the person who

should read it, would carry his rosary and sandals to the Bishop of Cuenca. We did not know with what intention this new father of the desert could desire to make such a present to his bishop. This seemed an outrage against humility, and the behaviour of a man who wanted to set up for canonization. Perhaps there was nothing in it but pure simplicity; for I do not pretend to decide the matter.

While we discoursed together on this subject, a pleasant thought came into Lamela's head. "Let us stay," said he, "in this hermitage, and disguise ourselves like anchorites, having first buried brother John. You shall pass for him; and I, under the name of brother Antony, will go begging in the neighbouring towns and villages. Besides our being secure from the inquiries of the corregidor, for I do not believe he will think of searching for us here, I have some good acquaintance at Cuenca, which we may cultivate." I approved of this extravagant proposal, not so much for Ambrose's reasons, as out of pure whim, or a desire of acting a part in a play. About thirty or forty paces from the grotto we dug a grave, in which we modestly interred the old anchorite, after having stripped him of his clothes; that is, a simple robe tied about his middle with a leather girdle: we likewise cut off his beard, to make a false one for me; and, in short, after having performed his funeral, took possession of the hermitage.

We fared poorly the first day, being obliged to

live on the provisions of the defunct; but next morning, before day, Lamela set out in order to sell the two mules at Toralva, and returned in the evening laden with victuals, and other things which he had purchased. He brought every thing that was necessary for our transformation: he made for himself a russet gown, and a little red beard of horse-hair, which he fixed so artificially to his ears, that one would have sworn it was the natural produce of his chin. There is not a more dexterous young fellow in the world than he; who likewise weaved the beard of brother John, which he applied to my face; and my brown woollen cap served to cover the artifice; so that there was nothing wanting to our disguise. We found each other so pleasantly equipped, that we could not, without laughing, behold ourselves in this dress, which truly was not very suitable to our real characters. Together with brother John's robe, I wore his rosary and sandals, of which I made no scruple to deprive the bishop of Cuenca.

We had been already three days in the hermitage, without seeing a soul appear; but on the fourth two peasants entered the grotto, bringing bread, cheese, and onions, to the defunct, whom they still thought alive. As soon as I perceived them, I threw myself on my bed, and it was no difficult matter to deceive them; for, besides that there was not light enough to enable them to distinguish my features, I imitated, as well as I could, the voice of brother John, whose last words I had

heard; and they had no suspicion of the cheat: they seemed only surprised to meet another hermit there; which, when Lamela perceived, he said, with an hypocritical air, 'My brethren, be not surprised to see me in this solitude: I have quitted an hermitage I possessed in Arragon, to come hither, and attend the venerable and discreet brother John, who in his extreme old age has occasion for a comrade that can provide for his necessities." The peasants gave infinite praise to the charity of Ambrose, and expressed great joy, in being able to boast of having two holy personages in their country.

Lamela, with a large havresack, which he had not forgot to purchase, went a begging for the first time in the city of Cuenca, which is but a small league from the hermitage. With a devout appearance, which he had received from nature, and the art of making advantage of it, which he possessed in a supreme degree, he did not fail to extort alms from charitable people, with whose liberalities he filled his havresack. "Mr. Ambrose," said I to him at his return, "I congratulate you upon your happy talent of melting the souls of Christians. Egad! one would think you had been a begging brother among the Capuchins." "I have done something else," answered he, "than fill my knapsack: you must know I have discovered a certain nymph, called Barba, whom I formerly loved, and whom I have found strangely altered: she (like us) has turned devotee, and lives with

two or three sisters of the same class, who edify the world in public, and in private live scandalous lives. As she did not know me at first, "How! madam Barba," said I, "is it possible that you do not recollect one of your old friends, your admirer Ambrose?" "By my faith! Signior de Lamela," cried she, "I should never have expected to see you again in the habit you wear! By what adventure are you become hermit?" "I cannot tell you at present," I replied, "the detail is somewhat long; but I will come back to-morrow to gratify your curiosity, and bring along with me my companion, brother John." "Brother John!" said she, interrupting me, "what, the good anchorite who lives in the hermitage near this city? Sure you joke; they say he is more than an hundred years old." "It is true," said I to her, "that he was once of that age; but he has grown a great deal younger within these few days; and is at present no older than I." "Well, let him come along with you," replied Barba: "I see there is some mystery in the case."

We did not fail the next day, as soon as it was dark, to go to the house of those bigots, who had prepared a sumptuous entertainment for our reception. We immediately took off our beards, and hermit's dress, and without ceremony, told them who we were. On their side, for fear of being indebted to us for our frankness, they showed what false devotees are capable of, when they banish grimace. We spent almost all the night at table,

and did not retire to our grotto till the dawn. We returned thither again in a very short time; or rather did the same thing almost every day during three months; in which time we spent two-thirds of our money with these nymphs: but one being suspicious of our characters, discovered the whole, and has informed justice against us, which this day intended to visit the hermitage, and secure our persons. Yesterday, Ambrose, while he was begging at Cuenca, met one of our sisters, who gave him a note, saying, 'One of my friends wrote this letter to me, which I was going to send to you by express; show it to brother John, and take your measures accordingly.' It was this billet, gentlemen, which Lamela delivered to me in your presence, and which has made us quit so suddenly our solitary habitation."

CHAP. II.

THE COUNCIL WHICH DON RAPHAEL HELD WITH HIS HEARERS, AND THE ADVENTURE WHICH HAPPENED TO THEM WHEN THEY DESIGNED TO QUIT THE WOOD.

When Don Raphael had ended his narration, which I thought a little tedious, Don Alphonso was so polite as to say it had diverted him very much. Then Signior Ambrose opened, and addressing himself to his fellow-adventurer, "Don Raphael," said he, "consider that the sun is set; it will be proper, methinks, to deliberate upon what we are to do." "You are in the right," replied his comrade; "we must determine upon the place to which we go next." "It is my opinion," resumed Lamela, "that we should set forward without loss of time, reach Requena this night, and to-morrow enter the kingdom of Valencia, where we will give the rein to our industry, and I foresee, perform some successful strokes." His confederate, who on that subject believed his presage infallible, assented to his opinion. As for Don Alphonso and me, leaving ourselves to the conduct of these honest people, we waited in silence the result of the conference.

It being, therefore, resolved that we should take the road to Requena, we began to prepare ourselves for the journey. We made another meal like that in the morning; and loading the horse

with the bottle and the remains of our provisions, the approach of night lent us that darkness which we needed for our more secure travelling, and we pushed forward to get out of the wood: but we had not gone an hundred yards, when we discovered among the trees a light that made us very uneasy. "What is the meaning of that?" said Don Raphael: "perhaps the ferrets of justice, having pursued us from Cuenca, understand that we are in this forest, and are come hither to search." "I do not believe that," said Ambrose: "these are rather travellers, who being surprised by the night, have come into this wood to wait for day. But," added he, "I may be mistaken. I will go, and reconnoitre, while you stay here, and I will be back in a moment." So saying, he advanced towards the light, which was not far off, and approached it softly. Pushing gently by the leaves and boughs that were in his way, and peeping with all the attention which the thing seemed to deserve, he saw on the grass, round a candle that stuck burning in a lump of clay, four men sitting, who had just dispatched a pie, and emptied a pretty large leathern bottle, which they embraced in their turns. He likewise perceived, at some distance from them, a lady and gentleman tied to trees; and a little farther, a chaise with two mules richly caparisoned. He guessed at once that the men were robbers; and their discourse, which he overheard, assured him that he was not mistaken in his conjecture. The four banditti expressed an

equal desire of possessing the lady, who had fallen into their hands, and talked of casting lots for her. Lamela having fully informed himself of the matter, rejoined us, and made a faithful report of what he had seen and heard.

Upon which Alphonso said, " Gentlemen, that lady and cavalier whom the robbers have bound to trees, are, perhaps, persons of the first quality: and shall we suffer them to fall victims to the barbarity and brutality of thieves? Take my advice, let us attack these banditti, and put them all to death." " With all my heart," said Don Raphael: " I am as ready to do a good as a bad action." Ambrose, on his part, signified his willingness to lend a hand to such a laudable enterprise, " for which," said he, " I foresee we shall be well recompensed." I dare likewise affirm, that on this occasion I was not at all afraid of the danger; and that no knight-errant ever showed more readiness to succour damsels in distress. But, not to conceal the truth, the danger was not great: for Lamela having reported that the arms of the robbers were all in a heap at the distance of ten or twelve paces from them, it was no difficult matter for us to execute our design. We tied our horse to a tree, and approached as gently as possible the place where they were talking with great warmth; and making a noise that helped us to surprise them, we made ourselves masters of their arms before we were discovered; then firing a volley

upon them, stretched them all breathless on the spot.

During this execution, the light going out, we remained in darkness; but, for all that, did not delay to untie the cavalier and lady, who were so much engrossed by their fear, that they had no power to thank us for what we had done in their behalf. It is true, indeed, they did not as yet know whether to look upon us as their deliverers, or as a new troop of banditti, who had not rescued them from the others with any intention to use them better. But we encouraged them, by protesting that we would conduct them to an inn, which Ambrose affirmed was not more than half a league from thence; and that they might there take all necessary precautions for their security, in going whither their affairs called them. After this assurance, with which they seemed very well satisfied, we replaced them in their chaise, and brought them out of the wood, leading the mules by the bridles. Our anchorites afterwards examined the pockets of the vanquished, took care of Don Alphonso's horse, secured those that belonged to the thieves, which we found tied to trees near the field of battle, and carrying them all off, followed brother Antony, who mounted one of the mules, in order to guide the chaise to the inn; at which, however, we did not arrive in less time than two hours, although he had assured us that it was not far from the wood.

Every body in the house being a-bed, we knocked loudly at the door; upon which the landlord and his wife got up in a hurry, and were not sorry to see their rest disturbed by the arrival of an equipage, which they thought would have spent more money than it did. The whole inn was lighted in a moment. Don Alphonso and the illustrious son of Lucinda offered their hands to help the cavalier and lady out of the chaise, and even served them as ushers to the chamber whither the landlord conducted them. There a great many compliments passed; and we were not a little astonished, when we understood that it was the Count de Polan himself, and his daughter Seraphina, whom we had delivered. It is impossible to describe the surprise of that lady, as well as of Don Alphonso, when they recollected each other. The Count took no notice of it, so much was he otherwise engrossed, in recounting to us in what manner the robbers had attacked him, and how they had seized his daughter and him, after having killed his postilion, page, and valet de chambre: he ended with telling us, that he had a deep sense of the obligation he lay under to us; and if we would come to him at Toledo, where he should be in a month, we should see whether or not he was ungrateful.

Nor did the daughter of this nobleman forget to thank us for her happy deliverance: and as Raphael and I imagined we should please Don Alphonso, by giving him an opportunity of talk-

ing a moment in private with that young widow, we gratified his desire by amusing the Count de Polan. "Fair Seraphina," said Don Alphonso to the lady, in a low voice, "I will no longer complain of the fate that compels me to live like a man banished from civil society, since I have been so happy as to contribute to the important service which you have received." "How!" answered she, sighing, "is it you who have saved my life and honor? Is it to you that my father and I are so much indebted? Ah! Don Alphonso! why did you kill my brother?" She said no more; but he easily perceived, by these words, and the tone in which they were pronounced, that if he was violently in love with Seraphina, she was no less enamoured of him.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

THE CONDUCT OF GIL BLAS AND HIS COMPANIONS AFTER THEY QUITTED THE COUNT DE POLAN. THE IMPORTANT PROJECT WHICH AMBROSE FORMED, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS EXECUTED.

THE Count de Polan, having spent one half of the night in thanking and assuring us that we might depend upon his gratitude, called the landlord, in order to consult with him about the means of getting in safety to Turis, whither he designed to go. We left that nobleman to take his measures accordingly, and departing from the inn, followed the road that Lamela was pleased to choose.

After having travelled two hours, day surprised us near Campelio; upon which we immediately betook ourselves to the mountains which are between that village and Requena, and there passed the day in reposing ourselves, and counting our finances, which were a great deal increased by the money of the robbers; for above three hundred pistoles were found in their pockets. As soon as it was dark, we set forward again, and next morning entered the kingdom of Valencia. We retired to the first wood that presented itself to our view,

and pushing a good way into it, arrived at a place through which a rivulet of crystalline water gently glided in its way to join the streams of the Guadalaviar.* The shade projected by the trees, and the grass which the place afforded in abundance to our horses, would have determined us to halt here, even if we had not been resolved upon it before. We alighted therefore, and prepared to pass the day very agreeably; but when we went to breakfast, found very little provision left. We began to want bread, and our bottle was become a body without a soul. "Gentlemen," said Ambrose, "the most charming retreats are but disagreeable without Bacchus and Ceres: our provision must be renewed: I will for that purpose go to Xelva, an handsome town not above two leagues from hence; so that the journey will soon be finished." So saying, he fixed the bottle and havresack on one of the horses, and mounting on the top of them, went out of the wood, with a dispatch that promised speedy return.

He did not come back, however, so soon as we expected: more than half of the day elapsed, and night was ready to cover the trees with her sooty wings, when we beheld our purveyor, whose stay had begun to give us some uneasiness. He exceeded our expectation by the quantity of things

* Guadalaviar, a river of Spain, that, taking its rise near the source of the Tagus, on the confines of Arragon and New Castile, traverses the first of these kingdoms, enters Valencia, waters the capital, and discharges itself into the gulf of that name.

with which he returned laden: he brought not only the leathern bottle filled with excellent wine, and the knapsack crammed with bread, and all sorts of roasted venison, but also a great bundle of cloth, which we observed with a great deal of attention. He perceived our admiration, and said with a smile, "I defy Don Raphael, and all the world together, to guess why I have purchased these things." Saying these words, he loosed the bundle, the particulars of which we had already observed in the gross. He displayed a cloke, and a very long black robe; two doublets with their hose; one of those inkhorns which are composed of two pieces tied together by a string, the horn of which is separated from the pen-case; a quire of fine white paper; and a padlock, with a large seal and green wax; and when he had exhibited his whole purchase, Don Raphael said to him in a jocular way, "Egad, Mr. Ambrose, it must be confessed you have made a fine bargain. What use, if you please, do you intend to make of it?" "An admirable one," replied Lamela. "All these things have cost me but ten doubloons; and I am persuaded that they will bring us in more than five hundred: you may depend upon it, I am none of those who encumber themselves with useless effects; and, to convince you that I did not buy all this like a fool, I will communicate the project I have formed.

"Having furnished myself with bread," added he, "I went into a cook's shop, where I ordered

six partridges, and as many pullets and young rabbits, to be put to the fire; and while they were doing, a man came into the shop in a rage, and, complaining loudly of the behaviour of a merchant in town, said to the cook, "By St. Jago! Samuel Simon is the most ridiculous merchant in Xelva; he has affronted me in open shop: the covetous wretch would not give me credit for six ells of cloth, though he knows very well that I am a responsible tradesman, and that he can lose nothing by me. Is he not a strange animal? He sells willingly on credit to people of quality, and had rather venture with them, than oblige an honest citizen without any risk. Was there ever such madness! Damned Jew! would he were taken in! My wish will be one day accomplished. There are merchants enough of my opinion."

Hearing the tradesman speak in this manner, and say a great many other things of the same nature, I had a certain forewarning that I should cheat this Samuel Simon. "Friend," said I to the man who complained, "what is the character of this person whom you mentioned?" "A very bad one," answered he hastily. "I assure you he is a rank usurer; though he affects the manners of a benevolent man. He was a Jew, and turned Catholic; but in his heart, he is still as much a Jew as ever Pilate was: for, they say, he abjured for interest."

I lent an attentive ear to all the discourse of the tradesman; and did not fail, when I came out

of the cook's shop, to inquire for Samuel Simon's house. A person showed it to me. I surveyed his shop, examined every thing; and my imagination, ready at a call, sketched out a stratagem which I digested, and which appeared worthy of the valet of Signior Gil Blas. I went to a broker's, where I bought these clothes; one suit for acting an inquisitor, another to represent a scrivener, and the third for playing the part of an alguazil.

"Ah, my dear Ambrose!" cried Don Raphael, interrupting him in a transport of joy, "what a wonderful idea! what a glorious plan! I am jealous of the invention, and would willingly give up the greatest strokes of my life to be thought the author of such a happy scheme! Yes, Lamela," added he, "I see all the richness of thy design, the execution of which ought to give thee no uneasiness. Thou hast occasion for two good actors to second thee, and they are already found. Thou, who hast the air of a devotee, will act the inquisitor very well; I will represent the secretary; and Signior Gil Blas, if he pleases, shall play the part of an alguazil. Thus," continued he, "are the cues distributed; to-morrow we will act the piece; and I will answer for its success, unless some of those unlucky accidents happen which confound the best concerted designs."

I conceived as yet but very confusedly the project which Don Raphael liked so much; but the whole was explained to me at supper, and the trick seemed ingenious. After having dispatched part

of our venison, and made our leathern bottle undergo a copious evacuation, we stretched ourselves upon the grass, and were asleep in a very short time. "Get up, get up," cried Signior Ambrose, at day-break: "people, who have great enterprises to execute, ought not to be lazy." "Deuce take you, Mr. Inquisitor," said Don Raphael, waking, "how alert you are! That bodes no good to Mr. Simon." "I grant it," replied Lamela; "and will moreover tell you, I dreamed this night that I plucked the hairs from his beard; is not that a villainous dream for him, Mr. Secretary?" These jokes were followed by a thousand more, which put us all in good humor: we made a cheerful breakfast, and then prepared for acting our several parts. Ambrose put on the long gown and cloke, which gave him all the air of a commissary of the holy office: Don Raphael and I dressed ourselves likewise, so as to bear a pretty good resemblance to a secretary and alguazil. We employed a good deal of time in disguising ourselves; and it was past two o'clock in the afternoon when we quitted the wood, and set out for Xelva. It is true, indeed, we were in no hurry, as our comedy could not begin before the twilight: we therefore went at a very slow pace and stopping at the city gate, waited there till night.

As soon as it was dark, we left our horses in this place to the care of Don Alphonso, who was very glad that he had no other part to perform. Don Raphael, Ambrose, and I, went immediately

into a publican's in the neighbourhood; and Mr. Inquisitor going foremost, said to the landlord, with great gravity, "Master, I want to talk with you in private." The landlord carried us into a parlour, where Lamela finding him alone with us, said, "I am commissary of the holy office, come hither upon a very important affair." At these words the publican grew pale, and replied, with a faultering voice, that he hoped he had given no cause of complaint to the holy inquisition. "Therefore," replied Ambrose, "it has no intention to give you any trouble. God forbid that, too prompt to punish, it should confound innocence with guilt: it is severe, but always just: in a word, a man must deserve its chastisements before he feels them. It was not you who brought me to Xelva; but a certain merchant, called Samuel Simon, of whom we have received a very bad report; it is said that he is still a Jew, and embraced Christianity through motives purely carnal. I order you, therefore, in the name of the holy office, to tell me what you know of that man. Beware of excusing him, on account of his being your neighbour, and perhaps your friend; for I declare, if I perceive in your evidence the least reserve, you yourself are a lost man. Come, secretary," added he, turning to Raphael, "do your duty."

Mr. Secretary, who already had his paper and inkhorn in his hand, sat down at a table, and prepared, with the most serious air in the world to write the deposition of the landlord, who, on his

part, protested that he would not betray the truth. "Well then," said the commissary inquisitor to him, "let us begin: answer only to my questions: I ask no more. Do you see Samuel Simon frequent the church?" "It is what I have not observed," said the publican; "I do not remember to have seen him at church." "Good!" cried the inquisitor: "write, that he is never seen at church." "I do not say so, Mr. Commissary," replied the landlord; "I only say, that I never saw him there: he may be in the same church with me, though I do not perceive him." "Friend," said Lamela, "you forget that you must not, in your examination, excuse Samuel Simon: I have told you the consequences of it. You must mention only those things that are against him, and not one word in his favor." "If that be the case, Signior Licentiate," resumed the landlord, "you cannot reap much from my deposition: I am not acquainted with the merchant in question; therefore can say neither good nor ill of him: but if you want to know how he lives in his own family, I will go and call Gaspard, his apprentice, whom you may interrogate. He comes here sometimes, to make merry with his friends; and such a tongue! he will discover the whole life and conversation of his master, and, I warrant it, find employment enough for your secretary."

"I like your frankness," said Ambrose; "and you show your zeal for the holy office, by informing me of a man acquainted with the morals of

Simon. I will report you to the inquisition. Make haste, then," continued he, "and bring hither that same Gaspard, whom you mention. But do things discreetly, that his master may have no suspicion of what passes. The publican acquitted himself of his commission with great secrecy and diligence, and brought along with him the merchant's apprentice, who was just such a very talkative young fellow as we wanted. "Welcome, child," said Lamela to him: "you see in me an inquisitor, nominated by the holy office to take informations against Samuel Simon, who is accused of Judaism. You live with him: and of consequence are witness to the greatest part of his behaviour. I believe it is unnecessary to advertise you of the obligation you are under, to declare all that you know of him, when I order you to do so in the name of the holy inquisition." "Signior Licentiate," replied the young man, "I am very ready to satisfy you on that head, without being commanded in the name of the holy office. If my master was to take me for his text, I am persuaded that he would not spare me: I will therefore deal as plainly with him, and tell you, in the first place, that he is a close hunks, whose true sentiments it is impossible to discover; one who affects all the exteriors of a holy man, but has not one scruple of virtue at bottom. He goes every evening to the house of a little Abigail." "I am glad to hear that," said Ambrose, interrupting him; "and I see, by what you say, that he is a man of bad morals: but an-

swer precisely to the questions I am going to ask. I am particularly enjoined to know what are his sentiments with respect to religion. Tell me, do you eat pork in your house?" "I do not think," replied Gaspard, "that we have eat of it twice during the whole year that I have lived with him." "Very well," resumed master inquisitor: "write, secretary, that pork is never eaten in the house of Samuel Simon. But, to make amends for that," continued he, "you doubtless eat lamb sometimes." "Yes, sometimes," replied the apprentice: we had some, for example, last Easter." "A lucky epocha!" cried the commissary: "Write, secretary, that Simon keeps the passover. This goes on excellently well; and, methinks, we have received good intelligence.

"Besides, you must tell me, friend," added Lamela, "if you have never seen your master caress little children." "A thousand times," replied Gaspard, "when he sees little boys pass by his shop: if they are at all handsome, he stops and fondles them." "Write, master secretary," said the inquisitor, interrupting him, "that Samuel Simon is violently suspected of decoying Christian children into his house, in order to cut their throats. A fine proselyte indeed! Oho! Mr. Simon, you shall have to do with the holy office, take my word for it. You must not imagine that you will be allowed to make your barbarous sacrifices with impunity. Courage! zealous Gaspard," said he to the apprentice, "declare all that you

know of the matter; and give us to understand, that this false Catholic is more attached than ever to the Jewish customs and ceremonies. Does not he spend one day of the week in total inaction?" "No!" answered Gaspard, "I have not observed that: I only perceive that on some days he shuts himself up in his closet, where he remains a long time." "Ah! ha!" cried the commissary, "he keeps the sabbath as sure as I am an inquisitor. Mark, secretary, mark that he religiously observes the fast of the sabbath. Ah! the abominable wretch! I have only one thing more to ask. Does not he speak also of Jerusalem?" "Very often," replied the young man: "he relates to us the history of the Jews, and in what manner the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed." Right!" said Ambrose: "Master secretary, let not this piece of intelligence escape you: write in large characters, that Samuel Simon breathes nothing but the restoration of the temple; and that he mediates night and day the re-establishment of his nation. I do not want to know any more; therefore it is needless to ask any other questions: what the trusty Gaspard has deposed, is enough to bring a whole synagogue to the stake."

Master commissary of the holy office having interrogated the apprentice in this manner, told him he might retire: but ordered him, in the name of the holy inquisition, to conceal from his master every tittle of what had passed. Gaspard, having promised to obey, took his leave: and we

did not tarry long after he went out, but leaving the public-house as gravely as we had entered, went and knocked at the door of Samuel Simon, who opened it with his own hand; and if he was astonished to see three such figures as we were, he was much more so, when Lamela being spokesman, said to him with an imperious tone, "Mr. Samuel, I command you, in the name of the holy inquisition, of which I have the honor to be commissary, to deliver into my hand, this instant, the key of your closet: I want to see if I cannot find something to justify the informations which have been presented to us against you."

The merchant, confounded at these words, reeled two steps backward, as if he had received a blow on the stomach. Far from suspecting us of any trick, he believed implicitly, that some secret enemy wanted to subject him to the suspicion of the holy office: perhaps too, knowing himself to be no good Catholic, he had cause to be afraid of an information. Be that as it will, I never saw a man more disconcerted: he obeyed without resistance; and opened his closet with all the respect that a man could show who is in terror of the inquisition. "At least," said Ambrose, while he went in, "at least you receive the orders of the holy office without contumacy. But," added he, "retire into another room, and leave me at liberty to perform my function." Samuel was as obedient to this order as to the first: he remained in his shop, while we three entered his closet, and

began to search for his cash, which we easily found; for it was in an open coffer, and in much greater quantity than we could carry off, consisting of a great number of bags piled one upon another, but the whole in silver. We should have liked gold better; but things being as they were, we were fain to accommodate ourselves to necessity, and fill our pockets with ducats. We stuffed our breeches with them, and crammed them into every other part which we judged proper to conceal them. In short, we were heavy laden, though our cargo did not appear; and this was owing to the address of Ambrose and Don Raphael, who, by their behaviour on this occasion, let me see that there is nothing like a man being master of his business.

After having done our business so successfully we came out of the closet, and for a reason that the reader will easily guess, Master Inquisitor took out his padlock, and fixed it to the door with his own hand; then applying the seal, said to Simon, "Master Samuel, I forbid you, in the name of the holy inquisition, to touch this padlock, as well as the seal, which you are bound to respect, since it is the true seal of the holy office. I will return at the same hour to-morrow in order to take it off, and bring further orders for you." So saying, he made him open the street door, through which we joyfully passed, one after another. When we had gone about fifty yards, we began to walk with such speed and nimbleness, that we scarce touched

the ground, notwithstanding the burthens which we carried. We soon got out of town, and, remounting our horses, pushed towards Segorba, giving thanks to the god Mercury for such an happy event.

CHAP. II.

THE RESOLUTION WHICH DON ALPHONSO AND GIL BLAS FORMED AFTER THIS ADVENTURE.

We travelled all night, according to our ordinary custom, and found ourselves at break of day near a little village two leagues from Segorba. As we were all fatigued, we willingly quitted the highway, to get among some willows which we perceived at the bottom of a little hill, ten or twelve hundred paces from the village, in which we did not think proper to stop. We found that the willows yielded an agreeable shade, being watered by a small rivulet; and the place suiting our taste, we resolved to spend the day in it. Alighting, therefore, we unbridled our horses to let them feed, and lay down upon the grass, where we took a little repose. We then emptied our knapsack and leathern bottle, and having made a plentiful breakfast, counted all the money which we had taken from Samuel Simon, and which amounted to three thousand ducats; so that, with this sum, and what we had before, we might have boasted of having a pretty good stock.

As it was necessary for some of us to go and buy provision, Ambrose and Don Raphael, having quitted their dress of inquisitor and secretary, said that they would take that charge upon themselves;

that the adventure of Xelva had only whetted their appetite; that they longed to be at Segorba, to see if some occasion would not offer of striking a new stroke. "You have nothing to do," added the son of Lucinda, "but wait for us under these willows; we will not tarry, but rejoin you in a very short time." "Signior Don Raphael," cried I, laughing, "bid us rather wait for you till doomsday: if you leave us now, I believe we need not expect to see you sooner." "We are affronted by your suspicion," replied Signior Ambrose; "but we deserve it at your hands: your distrust is excusable after what we did at Valladolid; and we cannot blame you for thinking that we will make no more scruple of forsaking you than of abandoning our comrades in that city: but, however, you are mistaken: the confederates, from whose company we withdrew, were persons of very bad character, and their society began to grow insupportable. We must do justice to people of our profession, by affirming, that there are no associates in civil life less divided by interest than they: but when there is not a conformity of inclinations among them, their good understanding may be broke as well as that of the rest of mankind. Wherefore, Signior Gil Blas," added Lamela, "we beg that you and Don Alphonso will have a little more confidence in us; and let not the desire of Don Raphael and me to go to Segorba, give you the least uneasiness."

"It is an easy matter," said the son of Lucinda, "to rid them of all the cause of anxiety: let them

remain masters of the cash, and then they will have in their own hands good security for our return. You see, Signior Gil Blas," added he, "that we come to the point at once. You shall have pledges in your hands; and I can assure you that Ambrose and I will set out without the least apprehension of your giving us the slip. After such a certain mark of our fidelity, will not you trust entirely to our promise?" "Yes, gentlemen," said I, "you may now do what you please." They departed immediately with the leathern bottle and knapsack, leaving me under the willows with Don Alphonso, who, after they were gone, said to me, "Signior Gil Blas, I must disclose my sentiments to you. I upbraid myself with having had the complaisance to come so far with two sharpers: you cannot imagine how often I have repented of this my conduct. Yesterday while I took care of the horses, I made a thousand mortifying reflections: I considered that it ill became a young man, who has principles of honor, to live with such wicked wretches as Don Raphael and Lamela; that if, unluckily, one day, which may not be far off, a trick should miscarry, by which we shall fall into the hands of justice, I shall be shamefully punished with them as a thief, and undergo the most infamous chastisement. These images incessantly occur to my fancy; and I own I have resolved, that I may no longer be an accomplice of their misdemeanors, to separate from them for ever. I do not believe," continued he, "that you will dis-

approve of my design." "No, I will assure you," answered I, "though you have seen me act the part of an alguazil in the comedy of Samuel Simon, do not imagine that these sort of pieces are to my taste. I take heaven to witness, that while I played such a fine part, I said within myself, 'In faith, Mr. Gil Blas, if Justice should now come and seize you by the collar, you would richly deserve the salary which she would bestow.' I feel myself, therefore, no more disposed than you, Signior Don Alphonso, to remain longer in such good company: and if you will give me leave, I will accompany you. When the gentlemen return, we will demand our share of the finances, and to-morrow morning, or this very night, bid them an eternal adieu."

The beautiful Seraphina's lover approved of my proposal. "Let us," said he, "get into Valencia, and embark for Italy, where we may engage in the Venetian service. Is it not better to carry arms, than lead this base guilty life? We shall even be in a condition to make a pretty good figure with the money which we have: not that I can use such ill-gotten wealth without remorse; but, besides that I am compelled by necessity, if ever I make the least fortune in war, I swear that I will indemnify Samuel Simon." I assured Don Alphonso that I entertained the same sentiments; and, in short, we resolved to leave our comrades next morning before day. We had not the least temptation to profit by their absence; that is, to

decamp immediately with the cash; the confidence they had shown, in leaving us masters of the money, did not permit us to harbour such a thought.

Ambrose and Don Raphael returned from Segorba in the evening; and the first thing they told us was, that their journey had been prosperous; that they had laid the foundation of a stratagem, which, in all likelihood, would be more advantageous than the last. Accordingly, the son of Lucinda was going to inform us of the particulars, when Don Alphonso declared his resolution to leave them; and let them know that I had the same intention. They used all their endeavours in vain, to engage us to accompany them in their expeditions; for we took leave of them next day, after having made an equal partition of the money, and proceeded on our way to Valencia.

CHAP. III.

AFTER WHAT DISAGREEABLE INCIDENT DON ALPHONSO FOUND HIS WISHES FULFILLED; AND BY WHAT ADVENTURE GIL BLAS OF A SUDDEN SAW HIMSELF IN A HAPPY SITUATION.

WE pushed forward cheerfully as far as Brunol, where unfortunately being obliged to halt, Don Alphonso fell sick of a high fever, with violent paroxysms, which made me afraid of his life. Luckily there was no physician in the place, and I was quit for my fear: he was out of danger at the end of three days, and my care helped to re-establish his health. He showed himself very sensible of what I done for him; and as we felt a reciprocal kindness for one another, we swore an eternal friendship.

We betook ourselves again to the road, still resolved, when we should arrive at Valencia, to take the first opportunity of a passage into Italy. But heaven disposed of us otherwise. Seeing a number of peasants of both sexes dancing in a circle, and making merry before the gate of a fine castle, we approached to behold their mirth; and Don Alphonso expected nothing less than the surprise with which he was seized all of a sudden. He perceived the Baron de Steinbach, who no sooner knew him again, than he ran to him with open arms, saying, in a transport of joy, "Ah,

Don Alphonso! is it you! What an agreeable rencounter is this! While enquiry is made after you all over the kingdom, chance presents you to my view."

My companion alighting immediately, ran and embraced the Baron, whose joy seemed immoderate. "Come, my son," said the good old man to him, "you will now know who you are, and enjoy the most perfect happiness." So saying, he carried him into the castle, which I likewise entered along with him: for while they embraced one another, I had alighted, and tied our horses to a tree. The master of the castle was the first person whom we met. He was a man of about fifty years of age, and had a very engaging aspect. "Signior," said the Baron de Steinbach, presenting Don Alphonso to him, "behold your son." At these words, Don Cæsar de Leyva (so was the master called) threw his arms about Don Alphonso's neck, and weeping with joy, "My dear son," said he, "you see in me the author of your being. If I have let you remain so long in ignorance of your birth, believe me, I did in that a cruel violence to myself: I have a thousand times sighed with sorrow; but I could do no otherwise. I married your mother through inclination, though she was of a birth inferior to mine; and lived under the authority of a harsh father, who reduced me to the necessity of keeping secret a marriage contracted without his consent. The Baron de Steinbach alone was in my confidence, and it was in concert

with me that he brought you up. In short, my father is no more, and I am now at liberty to declare you my sole heir. This is not all," added he; "you shall be married to a young lady, whose nobility equals mine." "Signior," cried Don Alphonso, interrupting him, "do not make me pay too dear for the happiness which you bestow. Cannot I know that I have the honor of being your son, without learning, at the same time, that you want to make me unhappy? Ah, Sir! be not more cruel than your own father, who, though he did not approve of your passion, was not so severe as to force you to marry." "Son," replied Don Cæsar, "I do not intend to tyrannize over your affections; but be so complaisant as to see the lady whom I destine for your bed; this is all I exact of your obedience. Though she is a charming creature, and a very advantageous match for you, I promise not to constrain you to make her your wife. She is now in the castle. Follow me, and you will own that there never was a more amiable object." So saying, he conducted Don Alphonso into an apartment, whither I attended them, with the Baron de Steinbach.

There was the Count de Polan, with his two daughters, Seraphina and Julia, and Don Fernando, his son-in-law, who was nephew to Don Cæsar; there were other ladies and gentlemen present also. Don Fernando, as has been already observed, had carried off Julia; and it was on occasion of the marriage of these two lovers, that the peasants of the neighbourhood were assembled to make merry.

As soon as Don Alphonso appeared, and his father had presented him to the company, the Count de Polan got up, and running to embrace him, said, "Welcome, my deliverer! Don Alphonso," added he, "observe the power that virtue has on generous minds: if you killed my son, you also saved my life. I sacrifice my resentment to you, and give you that Seraphina whose honor you have preserved. In this manner I acquit myself of my obligation." The son of Don Cæsar did not fail to testify to the Count de Polan, how much he was affected with his generosity; and I do not know whether he felt more joy in discovering his birth, or in learning that he was to be Seraphina's husband. In effect, that marriage was celebrated in a few days after, to the infinite satisfaction of the parties concerned.

As I was also one of the Count's deliverers, that nobleman, who knew me again, assured me, he would take upon himself the care of making my fortune; but I thanked him for his generosity, and would not leave Don Alphonso, who made me steward of his house, and honored me with his confidence. Scarce was he married, when the trick which had been played upon Samuel Simon lying on his conscience, he sent me to the merchant with all the money which had been stolen from him. I went accordingly to make restitution, and began the business of a steward, by doing that which ought to be the end of it.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

THE AMOURS OF GIL BLAS AND DAME LORENÇA SEPHORA.

I WENT accordingly to Xelva, to make restitution of the three thousand ducats which we had stole from Samuel Simon: and will freely own, I was tempted on the road to convert the money to my own use, in order to begin my stewardship under happy auspices. This I might have done with impunity; for, had I travelled five or six days, and then returned as if I had acquitted myself of my commission, Don Alphonso and his father would never have suspected my fidelity. I did not yield, however, to the temptation, which I surmounted like a lad of honor; a victory not a little commendable in a young fellow who had associated with great cheats. There are a great many who, though acquainted with honest people only, are not so scrupulous; those, especially, who are entrusted with sums which they may keep without hazarding their reputation.

Having made restitution to the merchant, who expected nothing less, I returned to the castle of

Leyva, which the Count de Polan having left, had set out again for Toledo, with Julia and Don Fernando. I found my new master more captivated than ever with Seraphina, his Seraphina enchanted by him, and Don Cæsar charmed with the possession of them both. I endeavoured to get the friendship of that tender father, and succeeded. I became steward of the family, regulated every thing in it, received money from the farmers, disbursed for the expense of house-keeping, and had a despotic power over all the servants. But, contrary to the usual practice of stewards, I did not abuse my power; I did not turn away those domestics who displeased me, nor expected that the rest should be entirely devoted to my will: if they addressed themselves directly to Don Cæsar, or his son, when they wanted any favor, far from thwarting their interest, I always spoke in their behalf. Besides, the marks of affection which I every moment received from my masters, inspired me with zeal for their service; and I had nothing but their interest in view. There was no legerdemain in my administration: and I was such a steward as is not every day to be met with. While I enjoyed the happiness of my condition, Love, as if he had been jealous of what Fortune had done for me, had a mind that I should owe some favors to him also; and produced in the heart of Dame Lorença Sephora, chief waiting-woman to Seraphina, a violent inclination for master steward. My conquest (to relate things like a faithful historian) glanced

upon her fiftieth year; but a lively look, an agreeable countenance, and two fine eyes, which she knew how to use to the best advantage, might be said to make her still pass for the object of an intrigue. I could have wished only for a few roses in her complexion; for she was extremely pale; a circumstance which I did not fail to attribute to the austerity of celibacy.

The lady practised upon me a long time by looks, in which her passion was painted; but, instead of answering her glances, I at first seemed not to perceive her design; by which behaviour I appeared to her as a novice in gallantry; a discovery that she did not dislike. Imagining, therefore, that she ought no longer to confine herself to the language of the eyes, with a young man whom she believed less knowing than he was, during the very first conversation we had together, she declared her sentiments in form, that I might not be ignorant of them for the future. This she performed like one who had been at school. She feigned to be disconcerted while she spoke to me; and, after having freely expressed all that she had to say, hid her face, to make me believe she was ashamed of letting me see her weakness. There was no resisting; and though I was determined more by vanity than inclination, I shewed myself very sensible of her affection: I even affected to be urgent; and acted the passionate lover so well, that I attracted her reproaches. Lorença reproved me, but with so much gentleness, that, while she

recommended moderation to me, she seemed not at all sorry at my want of it. I should have pushed things still farther, if the beloved object had not been afraid of giving me a bad opinion of her virtue, by granting me a victory too cheap. We therefore parted till another occasion: Sephora, persuaded that her false resistance made me look upon her as a vestal; and I, elevated with the sweet hope of bringing the adventure soon to a conclusion.

My affairs were in this situation, when one of Don Cæsar's lackeys told me a piece of news which moderated my joy. This young fellow was one of those curious domestics who make it their business to discover what passes in the family. As he was very assiduous in paying his court to me, and regaled me every day with something new, he came one morning, and told me that he had made a pleasant discovery, which he would communicate to me, on condition that I should keep it secret; because it regarded dame Lorença Sephora, whose resentment, he said, he was afraid of incurring. I was too eager to hear what he had to say, not to promise secrecy: but, without seeming to be the least concerned, I asked him, with all the indifference I could affect, what the discovery was with which he intended to entertain me. "Lorença," said he, "every evening, privately, admits into her apartment the surgeon of the village, a very stout young fellow; and the rogue always remains with her a considerable time. I am willing to believe,"

added he, with a satirical smile, "that this behaviour, may be very innocent: but you must allow, that a young man, who slips so mysteriously into a maid's chamber, gives a handle to scandal to be very free with her character."

Although this report gave me as much pain as if I had been actually in love, I took care to conceal my vexation: I even constrained myself so much as to laugh at the news that pierced me to the very soul. But I indemnified myself for that constraint as soon as I saw myself alone. I cursed, I swore, and mused upon the resolution I should take. Sometimes, despising Lorença, I proposed to abandon her, without even deigning to come to an explanation with the coquette: and sometimes, imagining that I was bound in honor to banish the surgeon from the house, I formed the design of challenging him to single combat. This last resolution prevailed: I lay in ambush towards the evening, and sure enough perceived my man enter with a mysterious air into the apartment of the duenna. This was necessary to support my fury. I went out of the castle, and posted myself on the road by which the gallant must return: here I waited for him without flinching, and every moment the desire of fighting with him increased. At length my enemy appeared, and I went forwards some yards like a drawcansir: but I do not know how the devil it happened, I found myself, all of a sudden, seized, like one of Homer's heroes, with an emotion of fear that arrested my steps; and I stood

as much confounded as Paris when he presented himself to fight Menelaus. I began to consider my man, who seemed strong and vigorous; and his sword appeared to be of an excessive length. All this had its effect upon me; nevertheless, out of a point of honor, or otherwise, though I saw the danger with magnifying eyes, and, in spite of nature, which made obstinate efforts to make me desist, I had the boldness to advance towards the surgeon, and unsheath my rapier.

Surprised at my action, he cried, "What is the matter, Mr. Gil Blas! What is the meaning of these demonstrations? You are pleased to be merry, I suppose." "No, Mr. Barber," I replied, "you are mistaken; I am in a very serious humor, and want to know whether or not you are as brave as gallant. You must not expect that I will let you possess in tranquillity the favors of the lady whom you visit at the castle." "By St. Come!"* said the surgeon, bursting into a loud laugh, "here is a pleasant adventure. Egad, appearances are very deceitful." From these words, imagining that he was as little inclined to fight as I, I became more insolent, and said, "Friend, that will not pass; do not think that I will be satisfied with a simple denial." "I see then," answered he, "that I shall be obliged to speak, in order to prevent the mischief which might happen to you or me; and I must reveal a secret, although people of our pro-

* St. Come was a physician and martyr; therefore not improperly invoked by the surgeon.

fession cannot be too discreet. If Dame Lorença admits me by stealth into her apartment, it is with a view of concealing her distemper from the servants. She has an inveterate cancer in her back, which I dress every evening. This is the cause of the visits which alarm you; so that you may henceforth keep your heart at ease. Though," added he, "if you are not satisfied with this declaration, but absolutely bent upon coming to points, speak the word; I am your man." So saying, he drew his long rapier, which made me shiver, and put himself upon his guard. "Enough," said I to him, sheathing my sword: "I am not a brute, to refuse to hear reason; after what you have told me, you are no longer my enemy; let us embrace."

At this discourse, which shewed him that I was not such a devil as I at first appeared to be, he laughed, put up his rapier, and gave me his hand: in short, we parted the best friends in the world.

From that moment Sephora presented nothing but disagreeable ideas to my imagination: I avoided every opportunity she gave me of conversing with her in private; and that with such care and affectation, that she perceived my disgust. Astonished at such a change, she resolved to know the cause; and at length, finding an occasion to speak with me apart, "Mr. Steward," said she, "pray tell me why you avoid the sight of me. 'Tis true, I made some advances, but you made suitable returns.

Recollect, if you please, the private conversation we had together: you was then all fire, but now you are all ice. What is the meaning of all this?" This was a very delicate question for a plain man, consequently it embarrassed me not a little. I do not remember the answer which I made; but it displeased very much, and that was enough. Sephora, though, by her sweet modest air, one would have taken her for a lamb, was a very tigress when her wrath prevailed. "I thought," said she, darting at me a look full of spite and rage, "that I did a great deal of honor to a little fellow like you, in discovering to him those sentiments which noble cavaliers would have glored in exciting: but I am justly punished for having unworthily abased them to a wretched adventurer." Had she stopped here, I should have thought myself cheaply quit. Her tongue, obedient to her fury, honored me with a hundred epithets, every one more bitter than another. I ought to have heard them with temper, and reflected, that, in disdaining the triumph of her virtue, which I had attempted, I committed a crime that no woman can forgive. But I was too passionate to bear reproaches, at which a sensible man in my place would have laughed: and my patience forsaking me, "Madam," said I, "we ought not to despise any body. If those noble cavaliers, of whom you speak, had seen your back, I am sure their curiosity would have proceeded no farther." I had no sooner uttered this repartee, than the furious duenna gave me the

rudest box on the ear that ever an affronted woman bestowed. I did not wait for a second; but, by a speedy flight, avoided a shower of blows, that would certainly have fallen upon my carcase.

I thanked heaven when I found myself extricated out of this troublesome affair; and imagined I had nothing to fear, since the lady had revenged herself. I thought that, for her own honor, she would never mention the adventure: and, indeed, fifteen days elapsed before I heard any thing of the matter. I myself began to forget it, when I understood that Sephora was ill. I was humane enough to be afflicted at the news: I pitied the lady; and believed that, not being able to overcome a passion so ill requited, she had fallen a victim to her unhappy love. I reflected with sorrow that I was the cause of her indisposition, and at least lamented the duenna, if I could not love her. How much was I mistaken in my opinion! Her tenderness changed into hate; and at that time her whole study was to do me mischief.

One morning being alone with Don Alphonso, and observing that young gentleman pensive and sad, I begged, in a respectful manner, to know the cause. "I am chagrined," said he, "to find Seraphina weak, ungrateful, and unjust. You are astonished at this information," added he, perceiving that I listened with surprize, "and yet nothing is more true. I do not know what cause you may have given Dame Lorença to hate you; but you are assuredly become so odious to her, that if you

do not leave the castle with the utmost dispatch, her death, she says, will be inevitable. You ought not to doubt that Seraphina, who has a regard for you, at first revolted against a hate which she could not gratify without injustice and ingratitude. But, in short, she is a woman: she has a tender affection for Sephora, who brought her up; and that governante is a sort of mother to her, whose death she would reproach herself with, if she was not weak enough to satisfy this her desire. As for my part, notwithstanding the love that attaches me to Seraphina, I shall never have the base complaisance to adhere to her sentiments on this subject. Perish all the duennas in Spain, before I consent to the removal of a young man whom I consider more as a brother than a domestic."

Alphonso having spoke thus, I said to him, "Signior, I am born to be the sport of fortune. I thought she would have ceased to persecute me in your house, where every thing flattered me with quiet and happy days; but how agreeable soever my situation may be, I find I must give it up." "Not at all!" cried the generous son of Don Cæsar. "Leave me to make Seraphina hear reason: it shall never be said, that you have been sacrificed to the caprice of a duenna, to whom too much consideration has been paid in other respects."

"Sir," said I, "you will only provoke Seraphina, in resisting her will. I had much rather retire, than, by a longer stay in this place, run the risk of creating any division between such a happy

pair: that would be a misfortune for which I should never be consoled."

Don Alphonso forbad me to take any such resolution: and I saw him so fixed in the design of supporting me, that Lorença would undoubtedly have met with a rebuff, if I had been inclined to oppose her. At certain times, being piqued against the duenna, I was tempted to expose her; but when I came to consider, that, in revealing her shame, I should stab the heart of a poor creature whose indisposition I was the occasion of, and that two incurable distempers visibly conducted her to the grave, my resentment was changed into compassion; and I concluded, that since I was such a dangerous mortal, I ought in conscience to re-establish, by my retreat, the tranquillity of the castle. This resolution I executed the very next morning before day, without bidding adieu to my two masters, lest, through friendship for me, they should oppose my departure. I contented myself with leaving in my chamber a writing, wherein was contained an exact account of my administration.

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CHAP. II.

THE FATE OF GIL BLAS AFTER HE QUITTED THE CASTLE OF LEYVA, AND THE HAPPY CONSEQUENCE THAT ATTENDED THE BAD SUCCESS OF HIS AMOURS.

I WAS mounted on a good horse of my own, with two hundred pistoles in my portmanteau, the best part of which I had got by the banditti whom we slew, and the share of the three thousand ducats which had been stolen from Samuel Simon: for Don Alphonso, without making me restore what I had fingered, had made restitution of the whole sum out of his own pocket. Wherefore, considering my effects as wealth become lawful, I enjoyed it without scruple. I was in possession of a fund, therefore, which did not allow me to be much concerned for the future, over and above the confidence which one of my age always has in his own merit: besides, Toledo presented an agreeable asylum; for I did not at all doubt that the Count de Polan would be pleased with the opportunity of obliging one of his deliverers with a kind reception, and an apartment in his house. But this nobleman I looked upon as my last resource; and I resolved, before I should apply to him, to spend part of my money in travelling through the kingdoms of Murcia and Granada, which I longed particularly to see. With this design, I set out

for Almansa, whence continuing my journey, I went from city to city, as far as Granada,* without meeting with any bad accident. Fortune, satisfied with having played so many tricks, seemed willing at length to leave me in quiet: but for all that, she was then hatching a great many more, as will be seen in the sequel. One of the first persons I met in the streets of Granada, was Signior Don Fernando de Leyva, who was, as well as Don Alphonso, son-in-law to the Count de Polan. We were equally surprised at seeing one another in that place. "Gil Blas," cried he, "how come you to be in this city? What business brings you hither?" "Signior," said I, "if you are astonished to see me in this country, you will be much more so, when you hear the cause of my quitting the service of Signior Don Cæsar and his son." Then I recounted all that had passed between Sephora and me, without the least disguise. He laughed heartily at the adventure: then growing serious again, "Friend," said he, "I offer you my mediation in this affair, and will write to my sister-in-law." "By no means, Signior," said I, interrupting him: "pray do not write; for I did not leave the castle of Leyva with any intention to return. Make, if you please, another use of the regard you have for me; and if any one of your

* Granada, the capital of the kindom that bears the same name, is the largest and most pleasant city in Spain, built on the banks of the river Darro, the seat of a famous university, and see of an archbishop,

friends has occasion for a secretary or steward, I beg you will speak to him in my favor. I dare assure you, that you shall have no cause to repent of your recommendation." "With all my heart," he replied; I will do what you desire. I am come to Granada to visit an old aunt who is sick, and I shall stay here three weeks longer; at the end of which, I shall set out on my return to my castle of Lorqui, where I have left Julia. I lodge here," added he, shewing me a house about a hundred yards from us; "come and call for me some hours hence; by which time, perhaps, I shall have discovered some suitable post for you.

And, indeed, at our very next meeting, he said, "The Archbishop of Granada, my kinsman, and friend, wants a young man of letters, who writes a good hand, to make fair copies of his writings; for he is a great author, has composed a vast number of homilies, and studies more every day, which he pronounces with applause. As I believe you are such an one as he wants, I proposed you to him, and he has promised to take you into his service. Go, and present yourself to him in my name; and you may judge by the reception which you receive, whether or not I have spoke in your behalf."

This was just such a place as I desired; wherefore, having dressed to the best advantage, in order to appear before that prelate, I repaired one morning to the archbishop's palace. Here, was I to imitate the authors of romance, I should give a

pompous description of this episcopal palace of Granada: I would enlarge upon the structure of the building, extol the richness of the furniture, describe the statues and pictures, and not spare the readers the least tittle of the stories they represented: but I shall content myself with observing, that it equalled the royal palace in magnificence.

I found in the apartments a crowd of ecclesiastics, and gentlemen of the sword, the greatest part whereof were the officers of his grace; his almoners, his gentlemen, his ushers, and valets de chambre. The laity were, almost all, so superbly dressed, that one would have taken them for noblemen rather than domestics, by their haughty looks, and affectation of being men of consequence. While I beheld them, I could not help laughing, and ridiculing them within myself. "Egad," said I, "these people are very happy in bearing the yoke of servitude without feeling it; for, in short, if they felt it, I imagine that their behaviour would be less assuming." Addressing myself to a grave jolly personage, that stood at the door of the archbishop's closet, in order to open and shut it when there was occasion, I asked civilly if I could not speak with his grace. "Wait," said he drily, "till his grace comes out to go to mass, and he will give you a moment's audience in passing." I armed myself with patience, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with some of the officers: but they began to examine me

from head to foot, without deigning to speak one syllable; and then looked at one another, smiling with disdain, at the liberty which I had taken to mingle in their discourse. I was, I own, quite disconcerted at seeing myself treated in this manner by valets; and had scarce recollected myself, from the confusion in which I was, when the closet door opened, and the archbishop appeared.

Immediately a profound silence prevailed among his officers, who, all of a sudden, laid aside their insolent carriage, and assumed a respectful look in the presence of their master. This prelate was in his sixty and ninth year; pretty much of the make of my uncle the canon Gil Perez; that is, plump and short: he was very much bandy-legged into the bargain; and so bald, that he had only a small tuft of hair remaining on the back part of his head; for which reason, he was obliged to cover his head in a fine woollen cap with long ears. In spite of all that, I observed in him the air of a man of quality; doubtless, because I knew him to be one. We common people look upon all your great noblemen with a prepossession that often gives them an air of greatness which nature has refused.

The archbishop immediately advancing towards me, asked what I wanted with a voice full of sweetness: and I told him, that I was the young man of whom Don Fernando de Leyva had spoke to him. He gave me no time to proceed, but cried, "O! you are the person then of whom he spoke

so handsomely. I retain you in my service: you are a valuable acquisition. You may stay where you are." So saying, he went out, supported by two ushers, after having heard some clergymen, who had something to communicate. Scarce was he out of the room, when the same officers who disdained my conversation, now courted it. They surrounded me, and, with the utmost complaisance, expressed their joy at seeing me become a commensal officer of the palace. Having heard what their master said to me, they had a longing desire to know on what footing I was retained: but I was so malicious as to balk their curiosity, in revenge for their contempt.

His grace returning in a little time, made me follow him into his closet, that he might talk with me in private. I concluded, that his design in so doing, was to try my understanding: accordingly, I kept myself on my guard, and was resolved to weigh every word before I should speak it. He first of all examined me on what is called humanity, and I did not answer amiss. He had occasion to see that I was pretty well acquainted with the Greek and Latin authors. He then put me upon logic, where I expected him, and found me quite master of that subject. "Your education," said he to me, with some surprise, "has not been neglected: let us now see your hand-writing." I thereupon took out of my pocket a sheet, which I had brought for the purpose: and the prelate seemed very well pleased with my performance. "I am

satisfied with your hand," cried he, "and still more with your understanding. I shall thank my nephew Don Fernando for having given me such an able young man, whom I look upon as a real present."

Being interrupted by the arrival of some noblemen of Granada, who came to dine with the archbishop, I left them together, and withdrew among the officers, who were quite profuse in their complaisance to me. I went to dinner with them at the usual time; and if they observed me at table, I did not fail to examine them also. What sagacity there is in the exteriors of churchmen! To me they appeared all saints; so much was my mind over-awed by the place where I was: and I did not so much as suspect that there could be any false money in the case; as if no such thing was even seen among the princes of the church.

Being seated by an old valet de chambre, whose name was Melchior de la Ronda, he took great care to help me to the choice bits; and this attention which he expressed for me inspiring me with a respect for him, he was charmed with my polite behaviour. "Signior Cavalier," said he softly to me, after dinner, "I want to have some private conversation with you." At the same time, he carried me to a part of the palace where nobody could overhear us, and there talked to me in this manner: "Son, from the very first moment in which I saw you, I felt an inclination for you: of this I will give you a certain proof, by imparting

something which may be of great advantage to you. You are here in a family where true and false devotees live pell-mell; so that it will be an infinite time before you can of yourself be acquainted with the ground. But I will spare you such a tedious and disagreeable study, by discovering the characters of both; after which you may the more easily conduct yourself.

"I will begin," added he, "with his grace, who is a very pious prelate, incessantly employed in edifying and reforming the people by sermons of his own composition, full of excellent morals. He quitted the court about twenty years ago, in order to devote himself entirely to his zeal for his flock. He is a learned man, and a great orator, whose sole pleasure consists in preaching; and his hearers are ravished with admiration. Perhaps there is a little vanity in the case: but, besides that it does not belong to man to penetrate the heart, it would be ungrateful in me to inquire into the faults of a person whose bread I eat. If I was permitted to disapprove of any thing in my master, I would blame his severity. Instead of making an allowance for ecclesiastical foibles, he punishes them with too much rigor: in particular, he prosecutes, without mercy, those who, relying on their innocence, attempt to justify themselves in a legal manner in contempt of his authority. I observe another fault which is common to him with a great many people of quality; although he loves his domestics, he makes no compensation for their

services, but lets them grow old, without ever thinking of procuring for them some small settlement. If he gives them gratifications sometimes, they owe them solely to the goodness of somebody who has spoken in their behalf: for it would never come into his head to provide for them otherwise."

This is what the old valet de chambre told me of his master; and he afterwards communicated his thoughts of the clergymen with whom we had dined; pictures which but ill agreed with their external deportment. Indeed, he did not represent them as dishonest men, but only as bad priests; excepting some, however, whose virtue he very much extolled. I was no longer at a loss how to regulate my features among those gentlemen: that very evening at supper, I, like them, assumed a sage aspect; a task that costs nothing: so that we must not wonder there are so many hypocrites in the world.

CHAP. III.

GIL BLAS BECOMES THE FAVORITE OF THE ARCHBISHOP, AND THE CANAL OF HIS BOUNTY.

I HAD been in the afternoon to fetch my baggage and horse from the inn where I had lodged; after which I returned to supper at the palace, where I found a very handsome chamber, and a down bed, prepared for me. His grace ordered me to be called early next morning; and gave me a homily to transcribe, enjoining me to copy it with all possible exactness. This I performed minutely, without having forgot either accent, point, or comma; so that the joy he expressed was mingled with surprise. "Good heaven!" cried he in a transport, when he had surveyed all the sheets of my copy, "was ever any thing seen so correct! You transcribe so well that you must certainly understand grammar. Tell me ingenuously, my friend! have you found nothing that shocked you in writing it over? Some neglect, perhaps, in the style, or improper term?" "O, Sir," answered I, with an air of modesty, "I am not learned enough to make critical observations; and if I was, I am persuaded that the works of your grace would escape my censure." The prelate smiled at my reply: and, though he said nothing, discovered,

through all his piety, that he was a downright author.

By this kind of flattery I entirely gained his good graces, became more and more dear to him every day; and at length understood from Don Fernando, who visited him very often, that I was so much beloved, I might look upon my fortune as already made. This my master himself confirmed to me, a little time after, on the following occasion. One evening he repeated in his closet, when I was present, with great enthusiasm, an homily which he intended to pronounce the next day in the cathedral; and, not satisfied with asking my opinion of it in general, obliged me to single out the particular passages which I most admired. I had the good fortune to mention those that he himself looked upon to be the best, his own favorite morceaus; by which means I passed, in his judgment, for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauties of a work. "This is," cried he, "what is called having taste and sentiment! Well, friend, I assure thee thou hast not got Bœotian ears." In a word, he was so well satisfied with me, that he pronounced with some vivacity, "Gil Blas, henceforth give thyself no uneasiness about thy fortune; I undertake to make it extremely agreeable: I love thee; and, as a proof of my affection, make thee my confidant."

I no sooner heard these words than I fell at his grace's feet, quite penetrated with gratitude:

I heartily embraced his bandy legs, and looked upon myself as a man on the highway to wealth and opulence. "Yes, my child," resumed the archbishop, whose discourse had been interrupted by my prostration, "thou shalt be the repository of my most secret thoughts. Listen with attention to what I am going to say. My chief pleasure consists in preaching; the Lord gives a blessing to my homilies; they touch the hearts of sinners, make them seriously reflect on their conduct, and have recourse to repentance. I have sometimes the satisfaction to see a miser terrified by the images which I represent to his avarice, open his treasures, and squander them with a prodigal hand. I have also tore, as it were, the Epicurean from his pleasures; filled hermitages with the sons of ambition; and confirmed in her duty, the wife who has been shaken by the allurements of a seducing lover. These conversions, which are frequent, ought of themselves to excite my study; nevertheless, I will confess my weakness; I propose to myself another reward, a reward which the delicacy of my virtue reproaches me with in vain! I mean the esteem that the world shews for fine polished writing. The honor of being reckoned a perfect orator has charmed my imagination; my performances are thought equally strong and delicate; but I would, of all things, avoid the fault of good authors who write too long, and retire without forfeiting the least tittle of my reputation. Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas," continued the pre-

late, "one thing that I exact of thy zeal is, whenever thou shalt perceive my pen smack of old age, and my genius flag, do not fail to advertise me of it: for I will not trust to my own judgment, which may be seduced by self-love. That observation must proceed from a disinterested understanding; and I make choice of thine, which I know is good; resolved to stand to thy decision." "Thank heaven, Sir," said I, "that period is far off: besides, a genius like that of your grace will preserve its vigor much better than any other; or, to speak more justly, will be always the same. I look upon you as another Cardinal Ximenes, whose superior genius, instead of being weakened by age, seemed to receive new strength from it." "No flattery, friend," said he, interrupting me; "I know I am liable to sink all at once: people at my age begin to feel infirmities; and the infirmities of the body often affect the understanding. I repeat it to thee again, Gil Blas, as soon as thou shalt judge mine in the least impaired, be sure to give me notice; and be not afraid of speaking freely and sincerely, for I shall receive thy advice as a mark of thy affection. Besides, thy interest is concerned: if, unhappily for thee, it should come to my ears, that the public says my discourses have no longer their wonted force, and that it is high time for me to repose myself, I frankly declare, that thou shalt lose my friendship, as well as the fortune I have promised. Such will be the fruit of thy foolish reserve!"

Here my patron left off speaking, in order to hear my reply, which was a promise to behave according to his desire. From that moment he concealed nothing from me; I became his favorite; an event which none of his domestics, except Melchior de la Ronda, could perceive without envy. It was a diverting scene to behold the manner in which the gentlemen and squires then lived with the confidant of his grace: they were not ashamed to be guilty of groveling meannesses, in order to captivate my good will. I could scarce believe they were Spaniards; though I did them good offices, without being the dupe of their selfish complaisance. His grace, the archbishop, at my request, exerted himself in their favor: for one he procured a company, and put him in a condition to make a figure in the army: another he sent to Mexico, to take possession of a considerable post which he had obtained for him: and my friend Melchior, through my means, enjoyed a handsome gratification. This condescension convinced me, that, though the prelate did not anticipate people's desires, he rarely refused any favor that was asked.

But what I did for a certain priest deserves, in my opinion, to be told. One day, a licentiate, whose name was Lewis Garcia, a young man of a very good appearance, was presented to me by our steward; who said, "Signior Gil Blas, this honest clergyman is one of my best friends. He was chaplain of a nunnery; and his virtue has not

escaped scandal: some people have done him ill offices with his grace, who has suspended him, and is unhappily so much prejudiced against him, that he will listen to no solicitation in his behalf. We have employed, to no purpose, all the persons of rank in Granada, that he may be re-established, but our master is quite inflexible."

"Gentlemen," said I, "you have gone the wrong way to work: it would have been better for Mr. Licentiate if no solicitation had been made; for in their endeavours to serve him, they have done him a manifest injury. I am well acquainted with his grace: intreaties and recommendations serve only to aggravate, in his opinion, the fault of an ecclesiastic. It was but the other day I heard him say to himself, "The more people a priest, who has been guilty of irregularity, engages to speak to me in his behalf, the more is the scandal augmented, and the more severity do I exercise." "That is unfortunate," replied the steward; "and my friend would be very much embarrassed, if he was not blessed with a good hand: happily for him he writes to admiration; and, by the help of that talent, keeps himself out of difficulties." I was curious to see if this writing, so much extolled, was better than my own: and the licentiate, who had a specimen in his pocket, shewed me a page that I admired very much, for it looked like a writing-master's copy. While I considered this beautiful performance, a thought, coming into my head, I desired Garcia to leave the paper, telling him, that I might pos-

sibly make some use of it that would turn out to his advantage; that I could not explain myself at that time, but would next day tell him more of the matter. The licentiate, to whom, in all probability, the steward had made an eulogium of my genius, withdrew as much satisfied as if he had been already reinstated in his office. I was truly desirous that he might be so, and that same day laboured for him in the following manner. Being alone with the archbishop, I shewed him the writing of Garcia, with which my patron seemed quite charmed: then laying hold of the opportunity, "Sir," said I to him, "since you will not cause your homilies to be printed, I wish they were at least written in this hand." "I am satisfied with thine," answered the prelate; "but I own I should not be sorry to have a copy of my work in that hand." "Your Grace," I replied, "has nothing to do but to speak: the man who writes so well is a licentiate of my acquaintance, who will be ravished to do that service for you; the more, because by these means he may interest your goodness in extricating him from the melancholy situation in which he has the misfortune to be at present."

The prelate did not fail to ask the name of the licentiate: upon which I said, "He is called Lewis Garcia, and is in despair on account of having incurred your displeasure." "That Garcia," said he, interrupting me, "was, if I am not mistaken, chaplain to a convent of nuns, and lies under the censure of the church: I remember

some informations that I received against him: his morals are but indifferent." "Sir," said I, interrupting him in my turn, "I will not undertake to justify him; but I know he has enemies; and says, that the authors of those informations which you have seen, were more bent upon doing him ill offices than on telling the truth." "That may be," replied the archbishop: "there are abundance of very dangerous dispositions in the world. Besides, granted that his conduct has not been always irreproachable, he may have repented of his misbehaviour; and, in short, there is mercy for every transgressor. Bring the licentiate hither; I take off his suspension."

Thus it is, that the most severe men abate of their severity, when more dear self-interest is concerned. The archbishop granted, without difficulty, to the vain pleasure of having his works well writ, that which he had refused to the most powerful solicitations. I carried the news immediately to the steward, and he imparted it to his friend Garcia; who, the very next day, coming to make an acknowledgment of thanks suitable to the favor obtained, I presented him to my master, who consented himself with reprimanding him slightly, and gave him the homilies to transcribe. Garcia acquitted himself so well, that he was re-established in his ministry; and even obtained the living of Gabia, a large market-town in the neighbourhood of Granada.

CHAP. IV.

THE ARCHBISHOP IS SEIZED WITH A FIT OF THE APOPLEXY. THE DILEMMA IN WHICH GIL BLAS FOUND HIMSELF; AND THE METHOD HE TOOK TO BE EXTRICATED.

WHILE I thus bestowed my service on different people, Don Fernando being about to leave Granada, I visited that nobleman before his departure, in order to thank him anew for the excellent post which he had procured for me. I appeared to him so well satisfied with my condition, that he said, "My dear Gil Blas, I am ravished to find thee so well pleased with my uncle the archbishop." "I am charmed with him," I replied, "and shall never be able to shew myself grateful enough for his generosity to me. Nothing less could have consoled me for the loss of Don Cæsar and his son." "I am persuaded," answered he, "that they are both extremely mortified at your absence; but, perhaps, you are not separated for ever: fortune may one day bring you together again." Melted by these words, I sighed, and found at that instant my love for Don Alphonso so great, that I would have willingly abandoned the archbishop, with all the agreeable hopes he had given me, to return to the castle of Leyva, if the obstacle that banished me from it had been removed. Don Fernando perceived the emotions of my soul, which pleased

him so much, that he embraced me with affection, and assured me that his whole family would always bear a part in my destiny.

Two months after this gentleman's departure, in the very zenith of my favor, we had a hot alarm in the episcopal palace; the archbishop was seized with a fit of the apoplexy: he was, however, succoured immediately, so that in a few days his health was re-established: but his understanding had received a rude shock, which I plainly perceived in the very next discourse he composed. I did not, however, find the difference between this and the rest so sensible, as to make me conclude that the orator began to flag, and waited for another homily to fix my resolution. This indeed was quite decisive: sometimes the good old prelate repeated the same thing over and over; sometimes rose too high, or sunk too low: it was a vague discourse, the rhetoric of an old professor, a mere Capucinade.*

I was not the only person who took notice of this: the greatest part of the audience, when he pronounced it, as if they had been also hired to examine it, said softly to one another, "This sermon smells strong of the apoplexy." 'Come, master homily critic,' said I then to myself, 'prepare to do your office. You see that his grace begins to fail: it is your duty to give him notice of it; not only as the depository of his thoughts,

* Capucinade.—A sarcasm on the sermons of the Capuchins, which are not remarkable for correctness of composition.

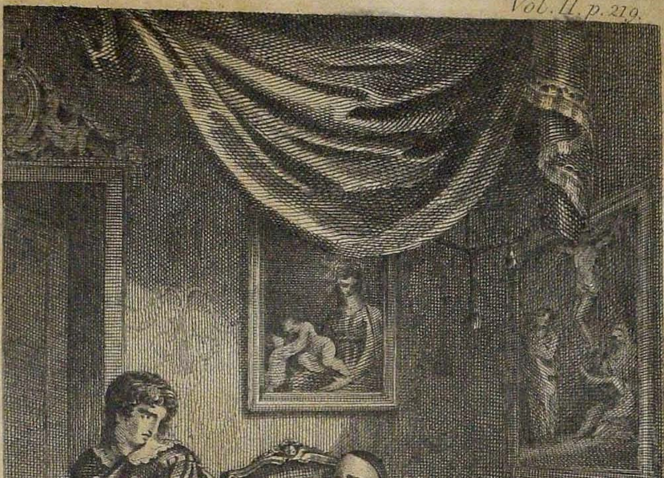
but likewise, lest some one of his friends should be free enough with him to prevent you: in that case you know what would happen; your name would be erased from his last will, in which there is, doubtless, a better legacy provided for you than the library of the Licentiate Sedillo.'

After these reflections, I made others of a quite contrary nature. To give the notice in question, seemed a delicate point. I imagined that it might be ill received by an author like him, conceited of his own works: but rejecting this suggestion, I represented to myself, that he could not possibly take it amiss, after having exacted it of me in so pressing a manner. Add to this, that I depended upon my being able to mention it with address, and make him swallow the pill without reluctance. In a word, finding that I ran a greater risk in keeping silence than in breaking it, I determined to speak.

The only thing that embarrassed me now, was how to break the ice. Luckily the orator himself extricated me from that difficulty, by asking what people said of him, and if they were satisfied with his last discourse. I answered, that his homilies were always admired; but, in my opinion, the last had not succeeded so well as the rest in affecting the audience. "How, friend!" replied he, with astonishment, "has it met with any Aristarchus?"* "No, Sir," said I, "by no means: such works as

* Aristarchus, a great critic in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

Vol. II. p. 219.



J. Smith, sc. 1 Clements Inn. Strand

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yours are not to be criticised; every body is charmed with them. Nevertheless, since you have laid your injunctions upon me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you, that your last discourse, in my judgment, has not altogether the energy of your other performances. Are not you of the same opinion?"

My master grew pale at these words; and said, with a forced smile, "So then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your taste?" "I do not say so, Sir," cried I, quite disconcerted: "I think it excellent, although a little inferior to your other works." "I understand you," he replied; "you think I flag, do not you? Come, be plain: you believe it is time for me to think of retiring." "I should not have been so bold," said I, "as to speak so freely, if your grace had not commanded me: I do no more, therefore, than obey you; and I most humbly beg that you will not be offended at my freedom." "God forbid," cried he, with precipitation; "God forbid that I should find fault with it. In so doing, I should be very unjust. I do not at all take it ill that you speak your sentiment; it is your sentiment only that I find bad. I have been most egregiously deceived in your narrow understanding."

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavoured to find some mitigation, in order to set things to rights again: but how is it possible to appease an incensed author, one especially who has been accustomed to hear himself praised? "Say no more,

my child," said he: "you are yet too raw to make proper distinctions. Know, that I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove; for my genius, thank heaven, hath, as yet, lost nothing of its vigor. Henceforth I will make a better choice of a confidant, and keep one of greater ability than you. Go," added he, pushing me by the shoulders out of his closet, "go tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats, and may heaven conduct you with that sum! Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas; I wish you all manner of prosperity, with a little more taste."

CHAP. V.

THE STEP THAT GIL BLAS TOOK AFTER THE ARCHBISHOP HAD DISMISSED HIM. HIS ACCIDENTAL MEETING WITH THE LICENTIATE WHO HAD BEEN SO MUCH OBLIGED TO HIM; WITH THE GRATITUDE OF THAT PRIEST.

I WENT out of the closet, cursing the caprice, or rather weakness, of the archbishop, and more enraged against him than afflicted at the loss of his favor. I even doubted some time, if I should go and touch my hundred ducats: but, after mature deliberation, I was not fool enough to refuse them. I considered, that this money would not deprive me of the right of ridiculing the prelate; in which I was resolved not to be wanting, as often as his homilies should be brought upon the carpet in my presence.

I went, therefore, and demanded the hundred ducats of the treasurer, without mentioning a single word of what had happened between his master and me; and went afterwards in quest of Melchior de la Ronda, to bid him an eternal adieu. He loved me too much to be insensible of my misfortune, which, while I recounted, I perceived that grief was painted on his countenance. In spite of all the respect he owed the archbishop, he could not help blaming his behaviour. But as I swore in my rage that the prelate should pay for it, and that I would make the whole town merry at his

expense, the sage Melchior said to me, "Believe me, my dear Gil Blas, you had better suppress your resentment. People of an inferior rank ought always to respect persons of quality, whatever cause they may have given them to complain. There are, I own, some very mean noblemen, who scarce deserve the least consideration; but, as they have the power of doing mischief, they are to be feared."

I thanked the old valet de chambre for his good advice, which I promised to observe. "If you go," said he, "to Madrid, you shall visit Joseph Navarro, my nephew, who is clerk of the kitchen to Signior Don Balthazar de Zuniga; and, I dare say, a young man worthy of your friendship; frank, brisk, obliging, and forward to see his friends: I wish that he and you may become acquainted." I answered, that I would not fail to wait on this Joseph Navarro, on my first arrival at Madrid, whither I was determined to go. I then quitted the archbishop's palace, with an intent never to set foot in it again. If I had still been in possession of my horse, I should have, perhaps, set out immediately for Toledo; but I had sold him while I was in favor, believing that I should have no farther occasion for his service. I hired a furnished room, resolving to stay a month at Granada, and then repair to the Count de Polan.

As dinner-time approached, I asked of my landlady if there was not an eating-house in the neighbourhood; and she answering, that there

was an excellent one a few steps from her house, where there was good accommodation, and a great deal of agreeable company, I made her shew me the place, and going thither a little after, was directed into a large hall, which bore some resemblance to a refectory. Ten or twelve people sat at a large table, covered with a dirty cloth, conversing with one another, while every one ate his own little portion. My mess was likewise brought, which, at another time, would doubtless have made me regret the table I had lost; but I was then so much piqued against the archbishop, that the scanty allowance of my eating-house seemed preferable to the good cheer I had enjoyed in his palace. I condemned a variety of dishes, and arguing like the doctor of Valladolid, 'Unhappy are those,' said I to myself, 'who frequent such pernicious tables, where a man must continually be on his guard against sensuality, for fear of overloading his stomach. Can one eat too little?' In my ill humor, I praised those very aphorisms I had hitherto very much neglected.

While I dispatched my commons, without fear of exceeding the bounds of temperance, the Licentiate Lewis Garcia, now become vicar of Gabia, in the manner already related, came into the hall. He no sooner perceived me, than he came running to salute me with the utmost eagerness, or rather with all the expressions of excessive joy. He hugged me close, and I was obliged to undergo a very long compliment on the service I had done

him. He fatigued me with his demonstrations of gratitude. "'Fore Gad, my dear patron, since I have had the good fortune to meet you here, we shall not part without a glass; but as there is no good wine in this eating-house, I will carry you, if you please, after our scanty repast, to a place where I will treat you with a bottle of fine dry Lucena, and a glass of fine Muscadine of Foncarrel. We must certainly commit that debauch. I wish I had the happiness of enjoying you a few days only at my parsonage at Gabia: there you should be received like a generous Mæcenas, to whom I owe the quiet and easy life I lead."

While he talked to me in this manner, his allowance was served, and he went to work, without ceasing, however, to entertain me, at intervals, with something which he thought would flatter my vanity. I laid hold of this opportunity to speak in my turn; and as he did not forget to inquire about his friend the steward, I made no mystery of my leaving the archbishop's service. I even related to him the most minute circumstance of my disgrace, to which he listened with great attention. After what he had said to me, who would not have expected to hear him, penetrated with the most grateful sorrow, exclaim against the archbishop? But this was the farthest thing from his thoughts. He grew indifferent and pensive, finished his dinner without speaking a word, then rising suddenly from table, bid me good b'w'ye, in a cool manner, and disappeared. The ungrateful

wretch seeing me no longer in a condition to serve him, spared himself even the trouble of concealing his sentiments. I laughed at his ingratitude, and looking on him with all the contempt he deserved, called to him aloud, that I might be heard, "Holloa! you sage chaplain of nuns; go and give orders to cool that delicious wine of Lucena, with which you promised to regale me."

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI

CHAP. VI.

GIL BLAS GOES TO SEE A PLAY AT GRANADA. HIS ASTONISHMENT AT THE SIGHT OF ONE OF THE ACTRESSES; AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT EVENT.

GARCIA was no sooner out of the hall, than two well-dressed cavaliers came in, and sat down by me: they began to talk of the players of the Granada company, and of a new comedy which was then on the stage. This piece, according to their discourse, made a great noise in the city; and I resolved to go and see it that very day; for I had not been at a play since my arrival at Granada. As I had almost all the time lived in the archbishop's palace, where that diversion was anathematized, I had taken care not to indulge that pleasure, but amused myself entirely with my master's homilies.

I repaired, therefore, at the proper time, to the play-house, where I found a numerous assembly; overheard all around me, dissertations on the piece, before it began, and observed that every body undertook to criticise on it. One person declared himself for, another against the performance.—"Was there ever a work better composed?" said one on my right. "What a pitiful style!" cried another on my left. Truly, if there are a good many bad authors, it must be allowed there are still

a greater number of wretched critics: and when I consider the mortifications that dramatic poets must undergo, I am astonished that there are any so bold as to brave the ignorance of the multitude, and the dangerous censure of witlings, who sometimes corrupt the judgment of the public.

At length the Gracioso* presented himself to open the scene. He was saluted, on his first appearance, with a general clap; by which I perceived that he was one of those spoiled actors in whom the pit pardons every thing: and, indeed, this player did not speak one word, nor perform one gesture, without attracting applause. The audience made him too sensible of the pleasure they felt in seeing him on the stage; and he abused their favor accordingly. I perceived that he sometimes forgot himself in the middle of a scene, and put their prepossession in his behalf to too severe a proof: for they would often have done him justice, had they hissed instead of extolling him to the skies.

There was likewise a clapping of hands at the appearance of some other actors, and in particular of an actress, who performed the part of a waiting-woman; whom, having considered with attention, no terms can express my surprise, when I recollected in her the person of Laura, my dear Laura! whom I still believed to be in the service of Arsenia at Madrid. I could not doubt that it was she; her shape, her features, the sound of her voice,

* A favorite actor.

every thing assured me I was not mistaken. Nevertheless, as if I had mistrusted the evidence of my eyes and ears, I asked her name of a cavalier who sat by me. "Hey!" said he, "from whence come you? It seems you are just arrived, since you do not know the fair Estella."

The resemblance was too perfect for me to be deceived by this disguise: I could easily conceive, that Laura, when she changed her condition, had also altered her name; and curious to know her situation, for the public is generally pretty well acquainted with the affairs of persons in her sphere, I begged to know of the same man, if this Estella had not some gallant of importance. He answered, that a Portuguese nobleman, called the Marquis de Marialva, who had been about two months at Granada, was at a considerable expense on her account. He might have told me a great deal more, if I had not been afraid of fatiguing him with questions. I was more engrossed by the news which this cavalier had told me, than by the representation of the play; and if any body had asked the subject of the piece, when I came out, he would have embarrassed me not a little. I did nothing but muse upon Laura, or Estella, and firmly resolved to go and visit her next day; though I was not without anxiety about the reception I should meet with. I had reason to believe, that the sight of me would not yield her much pleasure in this brilliant situation of her affairs: nay, I imagined that such a good actress, in order to revenge her-

self upon one with whom she had certainly cause to be dissatisfied, would probably disclaim his acquaintance. All this did not dissuade me from my design of going. After a slight repast, for such only my eating-house afforded, I went home to my lodging, where I waited impatiently for the next day.

I slept little that night, and got up before the sun; but as I concluded that a nobleman's mistress would not be visible so early, I spent three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering, and perfuming; resolved to present myself before her in such a condition, as would give her no cause to blush at seeing me again. I sallied out about ten o'clock, and repaired to her lodging, to which I received a direction, at the house where the players lived. She possessed the chief apartment of a large house; the door of which being opened to me by a chambermaid, I told her that I wanted to speak with dame Estella. The maid went to signify my desire, and I immediately heard her mistress pronounce, with a loud voice, "Who is the young man? what does he want? Let him come in." By this I concluded, that I had chosen an unseasonable time for my visit, that her Portuguese lover was at her toilet, and that her reason for speaking so loud, was to persuade him that she never received suspected messages. My conjecture was true; the Marquis de Marialva commonly passed the morning in her company; and I expected a very disagreeable compliment, when this

truly original actress seeing me appear, ran to me with open arms, crying, "Ah! my dear brother! is it you?" And with these words, embraced me several times. Then turning to her gallant, "My lord," said she, "pardon me for yielding to the force of blood in your presence. After an absence of three years, I cannot behold a brother, whom I tenderly love, without giving him some marks of my affection. Well, my dear Gil Blas," continued she, addressing me anew, "tell me some news of my family: in what condition did you leave it?"

This question embarrassed me at first; but I soon discovered Laura's intention, and seconding her artifice, answered, with an air suited to the scene we had to act, "Thank heaven, sister, our parents are in good health." "I do not doubt," she replied, "that you are astonished to find me an actress at Granada; but do not condemn me unheard. Three years ago, as you remember, my father thought he had settled me to advantage, by giving me in marriage to Captain Don Antonio Cœllo, who carried me from the Asturias to Madrid, where he was born. Six months after our arrival in that city, having had an affair of honor brought upon him by his own violent humor, he killed a cavalier, who had taken it in his head to favor me with some attention. This gentleman being related to persons of great quality and credit, my husband, who had no interest, fled into Catalonia, with all the money and jewels he could find in the house; embarked at Barcelona, crossed into

Italy, engaged in the service of the Venetians, and at last lost his life in the Morea, fighting against the Turks. In the mean time, our landed estate was confiscated, and I had but a very small jointure left. What could I do in such a troublesome extremity? I could not return into the Asturias: for what purpose go thither? All the consolation I should have received from my family, would have been no more than sympathy and condolence. On the other hand, I had been too well educated to be capable of embracing a life of libertinism. Upon what determination then could I fix? I have turned actress to preserve my character!"

The Marquis de Marialva, who lost not a word of the whole discourse, implicitly believed every syllable of what Don Antonio's widow was pleased to utter. He even joined in the conversation, and asked if I was in any business at Granada or elsewhere. I was in some doubt, at that instant, whether or no I should tell a lie; but thinking that unnecessary, I spoke truth, recounting every circumstance of my entering into, and quitting, the archbishop's service; which afforded infinite diversion to the Portuguese nobleman. It is true, that, notwithstanding my promise to Melchior, I made myself a little merry at the expense of his grace. But the most diverting part of the scene was, that Laura, who thought I had invented a story in imitation of her, burst out into loud fits of laughter, which, she would have probably spared, had she known that I did not dissemble.

Having ended my narration, which I finished with the lodging I had hired, word was brought that dinner was on table. Upon which I would have retired, in order to go and dine at my eating-house; but Laura, stopping me, said, "What do you mean, brother! You shall dine with me; and I will not even suffer you to live any longer in a hired room; for I intend you shall both eat and lodge in my house. Order your baggage to be brought hither this evening, I have a bed to spare."

The Portuguese nobleman, who, perhaps, was not very well pleased with this hospitality, addressing himself to Laura, said, "No, Estella, you have not convenience for him in these lodgings. Your brother seems to be a pretty young fellow; and the advantage he has in being so dear to you, interests me in his favor. I will take him into my service: he shall be my favorite secretary, and chief confidant. Let him not fail to come and sleep at my house this very night; for I will order an apartment to be prepared for the purpose. I will allow him a salary of four hundred ducats; and if, in the sequel, I have cause, as I hope I shall, to be satisfied with his behaviour, I will put him in a condition to console himself for being too sincere with the archbishop."

The acknowledgments which I made to the Marquis at this juncture, were followed by those of Laura, who improved upon mine. So saying, he saluted his theatrical princess, and went away.

She led me immediately into a closet, where seeing herself alone with me, "I should burst," cried she, "if I was obliged to resist any longer the inclination I have to laugh." Then throwing herself into an easy chair, and holding her sides, she laughed immoderately, as if she had lost her senses. I found it impossible not to follow her example; and when we had indulged ourselves sufficiently, "Confess, Gil Blas," said she, "that we have acted a pleasant farce; but I did not expect such a catastrophe; my design being no other than to provide for you a table and lodging in my house; which, that I might offer with decency, I made thee pass for my brother. I am ravished that such a good post has occurred to thee by accident. The Marquis de Marialva is a generous nobleman, who will even exceed his promise in thy favor. Another," added she, "might not, perhaps, have given such a gracious reception to one who quits his friends without bidding them farewel; but I am one of those good creatures, who cannot help seeing again, with pleasure, a rogue whom they have once loved." I candidly acknowledged my impolite behaviour, for which I asked pardon. She then conducted me into a very handsome dining-room, where we sat down at table, and, as a waiting-woman and lackey were present, behaved to one another like brother and sister.

Having dined, we went back to the same closet where we had conversed together before. There my incomparable Laura, giving a loose to all her

natural gaiety, demanded an account of all my adventures since our separation. I made a faithful recital of the whole: and when I had gratified her curiosity, she gave me the same satisfaction, in recounting the following history of herself.

CHAP. VII.

THE HISTORY OF LAURA.

I AM going to relate as succinctly as I can, by what accident I embraced the profession of a player.

Great events happened after you left me in such an honorable manner. My mistress Arsenia, rather tired than disgusted with the world, renounced the stage, and carried me with her to a fine estate, which she had bought near Zamora with the price of her favors. In this city we soon contracted an acquaintance, and going thither frequently, to pass a day or two, came back again, and shut ourselves up in our castle.

In one of these small journies, Don Felix Maldonado, the corregidor's only son, saw me by accident, and happening to be pleased with my appearance, sought an opportunity of speaking with me in private, which, that I may conceal nothing from thee, I own, was facilitated by myself. He was a cavalier not yet twenty years old, fair as Love himself, a mere pattern in shape; and still more engaging, by his gallant and generous behaviour, than by his person: for he made me an offer of a large brilliant, which he had on his finger, with such a good grace, and pressing intreaties, that I could not for my soul refuse

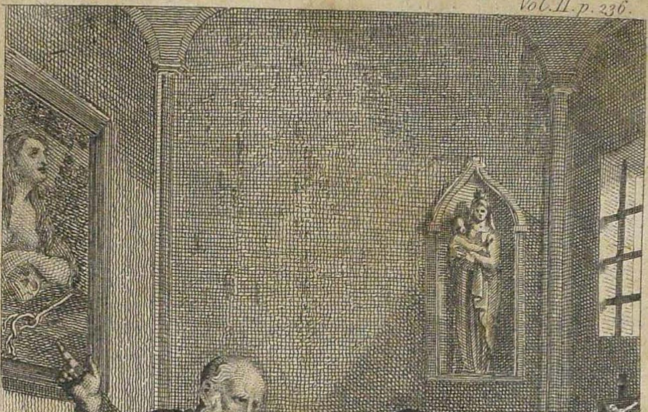
it. I did not possess such an amiable gallant with indifference. But what madness is it in Abigails to attach themselves to the young heirs of persons in authority! His father, the most severe of all corregidors, informed of our acquaintance, made haste to prevent the consequences of it, and ordered me to be apprehended by a troop of alguazils, who carried me, regardless of my cries, to the Hospital of Compassion.* There, without any other form or process, the superior ordered me to be stript of my ring and dress, and clothed with a long gown of grey serge, girded about me with a strap of black leather, from whence a rosary of large beads hung down to my heels. This being performed, I was conducted into a hall, where I found an old monk, of an order that I did not know, who fell a-preaching penitence to me, much in the same manner as dame Leonarda exhorted thee to penitence in the cavern. He told me that I was very much obliged to those who caused me to be shut up in that place, for they had done me infinite service, in rescuing me from the snares of the devil. I will frankly own my ingratitude: far from thinking myself beholden to those who had done me the good office, I loaded them with imprecations..

Eight days I passed in afflicting myself; but on the ninth (for I counted the very minutes) my fate seemed to bear another aspect. Crossing a

* In other words, the house of correction.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

Vol. II. p. 236.



J. Smith sc. 2 Clements Inn. Strand

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small court, I met the steward of our house, a person who ruled with unlimited sway; the superior herself was under his command; and he rendered an account of his stewardship to none but the corregidor, on whom alone he depended, and whose entire confidence he enjoyed. His name was Pedro Zendono: he was born in the town of Sellesdon, in Biscay; being a tall, pale, meagre man, whose figure would have served as an excellent pattern for the picture of a rank rogue. He scarce seemed to look at the sisters; and, in short, thou never sawest such an hypocritical face, although thou hast lived in an archbishop's palace.

Well then, I met this Signior Zendono, who stopt me, saying, "Daughter, be comforted; I am touched with your misfortune." He said no more, but went about his business, leaving me to make what commentaries I pleased on such a laconic text. As I believed him to be a good man, I innocently concluded, that he had taken the trouble of examining into the cause of my confinement, and finding me not guilty enough to deserve such unworthy treatment, was resolved to do me a good office with the corregidor. I was little acquainted with the Biscayan, who had quite other intentions. He then resolved in his mind the scheme of a journey, which he imparted to me a few days after. "My dear Laura," said he, "I am so much affected with your sufferings, that I am resolved to put an end to them immediately. In so doing I know I shall embrace my own ruin:

but I am no longer master of myself. I intend to take you out of prison to-morow, and conduct you in person to Madrid; being resolved to sacrifice every thing to the pleasure of being your deliverer."

I was ready to swoon with joy at these words of Zendono, who, judging by my acknowledgments, that I longed for nothing so much as liberty, had the impudence to carry me off next day, in sight of every body, by the following stratagem. He told the superior, that he had orders to bring me before the corregidor, who was at a pleasure-house two leagues from town; and, with the utmost assurance, made me get into a post-chaise with him, drawn by two good mules, which he had bought for that purpose; and, attended by no other servant than a valet, who conducted the chaise, and was entirely devoted to the steward, we set out, not for Madrid, as I imagined, but toward the frontiers of Portugal, where we arrived before the corregidor of Zamora could get notice of our flight, and send the beagles of justice in pursuit of us.

Before we entered Braganza, the Biscayan made me put on a suit of men's clothes, which he had had the precaution to provide; and now looking upon me as fairly embarked with him, said to me, at the inn where we lodged, "Fair Laura, be not offended with me for bringing you into Portugal; for the corregidor of Zamora will make search for us in our native country, as two criminals to whom Spain ought not to afford a retreat.

But," added he, "we can shelter ourselves from his resentment in this foreign kingdom; although it be at present under the dominion of the Spanish monarchy. Here we shall, at least, be more secure than in our own country. Follow, therefore, a man who adores you; and let us settle at Coimbra, where I will become a spy for the holy office, and under the shade of that formidable tribunal, our days will smoothly glide in ease and pleasure."

Such a forward proposal gave me to understand, that I had to do with a cavalier who did not choose to redress the grievances of damsels merely for the glory of knight-errantry. I perceived that he depended a good deal upon my gratitude, and still more upon my distress. Nevertheless, though these two considerations spoke to me in his behalf, I rejected his proposal with disdain. It is true, indeed, I had two strong reasons for showing myself so reserved: I disliked his person, and distrusted his circumstances. But when, returning to the charge, he offered to wed me as a preliminary, and showed me that his stewardship had put him in a condition to enjoy himself for a long time, I will not deny that I began to listen to his addresses. I was dazzled by the gold and jewels which he spread before me; and found, by experience, that as many metamorphoses are made by interest as by love. My Biscayan became gradually quite another man in my eyes: his tall, withered carcase assumed the form of a fine shape; his pale complexion seemed agreeably fair; and I gave

a favorable appellation to his hypocritical look. I then accepted his hand, without reluctance, in the face of heaven, which he called to witness our engagement. After this, he suffered no contradiction on my part: we set out again on our travels; and, in a short time, Coimbra beheld a new family within its walls.

My husband purchased for me some handsome clothes adapted to my own sex, and presented me with several diamonds, among which I recollected that of Don Felix Maldonado. This discovery was sufficient to make me conceive how all the jewels I had seen were acquired, and to persuade me that I had not married a scrupulous observer of the seventh article of the decalogue. But considering myself as the first cause of his dexterity, I forgave him in my heart: for a woman will excuse even the bad actions which her beauty prompts the men to commit; otherwise, I should have thought him an execrable villain.

I was pretty well satisfied with him for two or three months, during which he behaved in a gallant manner, and seemed to love me with great tenderness: nevertheless, these marks of affection were false appearances; for the rogue cheated me at last. One morning, on my return from mass, I found nothing at home but bare walls: the whole furniture, with all my baggage, was carried off. Zendono and his faithful valet had taken their measures so well, that in less than an hour the general pillage of the house had been begun and

finished in such a manner, that, with the clothes only which I had on my back, and the ring of Don Felix, which was luckily on my finger, I saw myself abandoned by an ungrateful wretch, like another Ariadne. But, I assure thee, I did not amuse myself with making elegies on my misfortunes; I rather thanked heaven for having delivered me from such a wretch, who could not fail, soon or late, to fall into the hands of justice; and looked upon the days we had spent together as so much lost time, for which I would soon make myself amends. Had I been desirous of staying in Portugal, and attaching myself to some lady of fashion, I should not have wanted a place; but, whether I loved my own country, or was influenced by the force of destiny, which prepared a better fortune for me here, I resolved to return to Spain; and applying to a jeweller, who gave me ready money for my ring, set out with an old Spanish lady, who was going in a chaise to Seville.

This person, whose name was Dorothea, had been to visit one of her relations settled at Coimbra, and was on her return to Seville, where she lived. There was such a sympathy between her disposition and mine, that we became friends the very first day of our journey; and our mutual affection grew so strong on the road, that, on our arrival, the lady would suffer me to lodge no where but in her house. I had no cause to repent of my acquaintance, for I never knew a woman of a better character; and one might still per-

ceive, by her features, and the sparkling of her eyes, that in her youth many a guitar had been thrummed on her account; indeed, she was the widow of several noble husbands, and lived in an honorable manner on the jointures which she enjoyed.

Among other excellent qualities, she had that of being very compassionate to unfortunate young women. When I imparted to her my own story, she entered warmly into my interests, and bestowed a thousand curses on Zendono. "What dogs these men are!" said she, in a tone that made me guess she had met with some steward in her way: "Perfidious wretches! I know there are such villains in the world, who divert themselves in deceiving women. What I am pleased at, my dear child," added she, "is, that, according to your relation, you are no longer bound to that perjured Biscayan: if your marriage with him was good enough to secure your reputation, by way of recompense, it is also bad enough to permit you to contract a better whenever you can find an opportunity."

I went abroad every day with Dorothea, either to church or to visit; and this being the way to meet with some adventure soon, I attracted the notice of several cavaliers, who, in order to sound the business, made interest with my old landlady. But some had not wherewithal to make a good settlement, and others were still minors; so that I had not the least desire of listening to any of

them. One day, Dorothea and I took a whim of going to see a play at Seville;* and, upon consulting the bill, we found that the players intended to act, *La famosa Comedia el Embaxador de Simo*, composed by Le Vega Carpio.

Among the actresses who appeared on the stage, I discovered my old friend Phenicia, that jolly merry wench whom thou hast seen when she was waiting-maid to Florimonda, and with whom thou hast sometimes supped at Arsenia's house. I knew that she had not been in Madrid for two years before, but was ignorant of her being an actress. Having an eager desire of embracing her, I found the piece very tedious: but this might be the fault of the actors, who played either too ill, or too well, to yield me amusement; for as to me, who am a merry creature, I own myself as much diverted by a player who is perfectly ridiculous, as by one who is excellent in his way.

* Seville, situated on the Guadalquiver, is the capital of Andalusia, and, next to Madrid, the richest city in Spain. It is the seat of an university, archbishop, inquisition, and mint. So ancient, that over one of the gates is the following inscription:

"Condidit Alcides, renovavit Julius urbem,
"Restituit Christo Fernandus tertius hæres."

And so remarkable for curiosities, as to be the subject of this distich:

Qui non havisto Sevilla,
Non havisto maravilla.

The translation of which the reader will find, on another occasion, in the third volume.

At length, the moment I waited for being arrived, that is, the end of *La famosa Comedia*, my widow and I went behind the scenes, where we perceived Phenicia acting the coquette, and listening with affectation to the soft warbling of a young bird, which, it seems, had allowed itself to be ensnared by her declamation. She no sooner observed me, than, quitting her admirer with a courteous air, she came towards me with open arms, and loaded me with caresses. We expressed our mutual joy at seeing one another again; but the time and place not permitting us to engage in a long conversation, we deferred it till next day, when we might discourse together more fully at her lodgings.

The itch of talking is one of the most eager passions of women: I could not close an eye the whole night, so much did I long to engage Phenicia, and worry her with questions upon questions. God knows, I was not lazy in getting up, to repair to her lodging, according to the direction she had given me. She lived with the whole company in a large hired house, which, when I entered, I met a maid-servant, who, when I desired her to conduct me to Phenicia's apartment, shewed me up to a gallery, on one side of which were ten or twelve small chambers, divided from one another by partitions of deal boards only, and possessed by the joyous band. My guide knocked at a door, which Phenicia, whose tongue itched as well as mine, came and opened. Scarce did we

allow ourselves time to sit, before we began to chatter. We had a severe brush, and uttered in our turns so many interrogations, that the questions and replies succeeded one another with surprising volubility.

After having recounted our mutual adventures, and reciprocally informed ourselves of the state of our affairs, Phenicia asked what I intended to do. I answered, that I was resolved, until something better should turn up, to enter into the service of some young lady of quality. "O fie!" cried my friend, "you joke sure! Is it possible, my dear, that thou art not yet disgusted with servitude? Art thou not tired with seeing thyself subjected to another's will, with humoring the caprices of a mistress, with hearing thyself reproached, and, in one word, with being a slave? Why wilt thou not, by my example, embrace a theatrical life? Nothing can be more convenient for people of spirit, who have neither birth nor fortune: it is a situation that holds the middle place between the nobility and citizens; an unrestricted condition, free of that decorum which is so troublesome to society. Our revenues are paid in ready cash by the public, which is our bank; we live in continual mirth, and spend our money as we get it.

"The stage," added she, "is particularly favorable to women. While I lived with Florimonda, (I blush at the remembrance of it,) I was reduced to the necessity of listening to the candle-

snuffers of the prince's company; not one man of fashion paid the least attention to my figure. What was the cause of this unimportance? I was not seen: the finest picture has not its effect, except in a particular light: but since I have been placed on my proper pedestal, that is, on the stage, heavens, what a change has happened! I see at my heels the gayest youth of all the towns through which we pass. An actress, therefore, enjoys a great deal of pleasure in her occupation. If she is prudent, (I mean, if she favors one gallant only at a time,) she has all the honor imaginable paid to her; her chastity is applauded; and when she changes her lover, she is looked upon as a real widow who marries a second husband. Nay, if a widow takes a third, she is spoken of with contempt, and said to have infringed the delicacy of her sex; whereas the actress seems to be more and more regarded in proportion to the increase of her admirers. After she has gone through a hundred intrigues, she is still a morsel for a lord."

"To whom do you talk in this manner?" said I, interrupting her: "Do you think that I am ignorant of these advantages? I have often reflected on them, and they but too much flatter the imagination of such a girl as me: I even feel an inclination for the stage; but that alone is not sufficient; talent is absolutely necessary, and I have none: for when I sometimes attempted to repeat passages of plays before Arsenia, she always found fault with my performance; so that I was

disgusted at the profession." "Thou art easily discouraged," replied Phenicia. "Dost thou not know that these great actresses are commonly jealous? They are afraid (in spite of all their vanity) of being eclipsed. In short, I will not take Arsenia's word for thy incapacity; for she was certainly insincere: nay, I assure thee, without flattery, that thou art born for the stage: thou hast genius, a free and graceful carriage, a sweet voice, a good chest, and withal a face! Ah, baggage, how many cavaliers wilt thou charm if thou turnest actress!"

She plied me with more such seducing discourse, and made me pronounce some verses, that I myself might judge of my capacity for acting; but when she heard me, it was quite another case; she overwhelmed me with applause, and preferred me to all the actresses in Madrid. After this, I should have been inexcusable, had I doubted my own merit. Arsenia stood impeached, and convicted of envy and insincerity; and I could not help allowing that I was an admirable subject. Two actors, who happened to come in at that instant, and before whom Phenicia obliged me to repeat the verses which I had already recited to her, were seized with a kind of ecstasy; from which they no sooner recollected themselves, than they loaded me with praise. In good earnest, had the three wagered with one another which of them should applaud me most, they could not have employed more hyperbolical expressions. My modesty was not proof against such eulogiums; I began to be-

lieve myself of some value; and thus my thoughts were turned towards the stage.

"Come on then, my dear," said I to Phenicia, "the affair is determined: I will follow thy advice, and enter into the company, provided they think well of it." My friend, transported with joy at these words, hugged me in her arms; and her two comrades seemed no less delighted to find me in these sentiments. We agreed that next day I should repair to the theatre in the morning, and before the whole company assembled, show the same sample of my talent that I had exhibited to them. If I had acquired the good opinion of those who were at Phenicia's lodgings, all the actors judged of me still more favorably, when I had pronounced about twenty verses in their presence. They received me very willingly into their company; and then I was wholly engrossed by my first appearance, which, that I might render as gay as possible, I employed upon it all the money that remained from the sale of my ring; and though I had not enough to make a superb figure, I at least found means to supply the want of magnificence by a genteel taste in my dress.

At length I appeared on the stage for the first time; and then, what thundering applause, what eulogium was I favored with! It is downright modesty, my friend, to say simply that I ravished the audience; one must have been witness of the noise I made at Seville to believe it. I became the discourse of the whole city, which, during three

weeks, came in crowds to the playhouse in such a manner, that the company, by this novelty, recalled the public, which had begun to desert them. I began then in a manner that charmed every body; and this was the same thing as if I had advertised myself to be let to the highest bidder. Twenty cavaliers, of all ages, outvied one another in their proffers to me; and if I had followed my own inclination, I would have chosen him who was young and handsome: but people of our stamp ought to consult nothing but their interest and ambition when a settlement is depending. For this reason, Don Ambrosio de Nisana, a man already old and ugly, but rich, generous, and one of the most powerful noblemen of Andalusia, had the preference. True, indeed, I made him purchase my favors at a good price; he hired for me a grand house, which he furnished in a very magnificent manner; gave me an expert cook, two lackeys, a chambermaid, and a thousand ducats for my monthly expense, over and above rich clothes, and a pretty large quantity of jewels.

What a change was this in my fortune! My reason could not support it: I appeared to myself all of a sudden quite another person; and I am not surprised that there are girls who forget in a little time the meanness and misery from which they are rescued by the caprice of a man of quality. I will make a sincere confession; the applause of the public, the flattering discourse that I heard from all quarters, and the passion of Don Am-

brosio, inspired me with sentiments of vanity that amounted to mere extravagance. I considered my talent as a noble title; I assumed the airs of a woman of quality; and becoming as covetous as I had before been prodigal of my smiles, resolved to limit my prospect to dukes, counts, and marquises only.

Signior de Nisana came to sup at my house every evening with some of his friends; and I, on my side, took care to invite the most engaging of our actresses, so that we commonly spent the best part of the night in drinking and making merry. I accommodated myself mighty well to such an agreeable life, which, however, lasted but six months. Noblemen are apt to change, otherwise they would be too amiable. Don Ambrosio forsook me, for a conquest he had made of a young creature from Granada, who had arrived at Seville with some charms, and the talent of disposing them to the best advantage. My affliction at his inconstancy did not last, however, longer than four-and-twenty hours. I chose in his room a cavalier of two-and-twenty, called Don Lewis d'Alcacer, to whom, in point of person, few Spaniards could be compared. Thou wilt, doubtless, ask, and thou hast reason so to do, why I took such a young nobleman for my gallant, when I knew the consequences of such a choice. But, besides that Don Lewis had neither father nor mother, and already enjoyed his estate, I must tell thee, that these consequences are not to be dreaded but by girls of a servile condition,

or unhappy she-adventurers. Women of our profession are privileged persons, and not at all answerable for the effects that our charms produce. So much the worse for those families whose heirs we pillage.

Alcacer and I attached ourselves so strongly to one another, that no mutual passion, I believe, ever equalled that with which we were inflamed. We loved with so much fury, that one would have thought we were both enchanted; and those who were acquainted with our correspondence, believed us the most happy lovers in the world; though we were, in reality, the most miserable. If Don Lewis had a person altogether amiable, he was at the same time so jealous, that he afflicted me incessantly with unjust suspicions. It was in vain for me to accommodate myself to this weakness, to constrain myself so far as not to look upon a man; his distrust, ingenious in finding out crimes to lay to my charge, rendered my caution altogether useless. Our most tender moments were always disturbed by quarrels, which it was impossible to endure. Both of us lost our patience, and we broke in a friendly manner. Wouldst thou believe it? we looked upon the last day as the most charming of our commerce. Equally fatigued with the troubles we had undergone, we expressed the utmost joy in our mutual adieu. We were like two miserable captives, who, after a rude slavery, at last recover their freedom.

Since that adventure, I am always on my guard

against love. I will no more contract attachments that may disturb my repose: it does not become those of our profession to sigh like other people; and we ought not to entertain in private a passion, the ridicule of which we represent in public.

About this time I afforded some employment to fame, which reported every where, that I was an inimitable actress. On the assurance of this goddess, the players of Granada wrote to me, proposing that I should enter into their company: and to let me know that the proposal was not to be rejected, sent me an account of their daily expense, and the terms of their offer; from which I concluded, that it would be for my interest to comply. I accepted it, therefore: though, at bottom, I was grieved at parting from Phenicia and Dorothea, whom I loved as much as one woman is capable of loving others of her sex. I left the first busy in melting the plate of a little merchant goldsmith, who, out of vanity, would have an actress for his mistress. I forgot to tell thee, that when I devoted myself to the stage, I changed, through whim, my name from Laura to that of Estella, under which appellation I set out for Granada.

Here my first appearance was no less lucky than at Seville, and I saw myself at once surrounded by admirers; but being resolved to favor none, except in an honorable way, I behaved to them with so much reserve, that they were blinded by my affected modesty. Nevertheless, that I would not be the dupe of a conduct that might be of no service,

and which, indeed, was not natural to me, I was going to listen to a young judge of the citizen race, who assumes the nobleman by virtue of his office, a sumptuous table, and rich equipage, when I saw, for the first time, the Marquis de Marialva. This Portuguese lord, who travels through Spain out of curiosity, stopped on his way at Granada; and coming to the play one night, when I did not act, considered with great attention the actresses who presented themselves, and found one to his liking. He made an acquaintance with her the very next day, and was ready to conclude the bargain, when I appeared on the stage. My figure, and the airs I gave myself, turned the weathercock all of a sudden; and the Portuguese attached himself to me only. To confess the truth, as I was not ignorant that my comrade had pleased that nobleman, I spared nothing to deprive her of her conquest; and I had the good fortune to accomplish it. I know that she bears me a grudge for my success, but I could not help doing it; and she ought to consider, it is a thing so natural to women, that the best friends make no scruple of practising it on one another.

CHAP. VIII.

THE RECEPTION WHICH GIL BLAS MET WITH FROM THE PLAYERS OF GRANADA, AND HIS FINDING AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE BEHIND THE SCENES.

LAURA had no sooner finished her story, than an old actress, who lived in the neighbourhood, came to take her up in her way to the playhouse. This venerable stage heroine would have been very proper for playing the part of the goddess Cotys. My sister did not fail to present her brother to this superannuated figure; upon which, a great many compliments passed on both sides.

I left them together, telling the steward's widow, that I would rejoin her at the theatre, as soon as I ordered my baggage to be carried to the Marquis de Marialva's house, to which he gave me a direction. I went immediately to my own room; from whence, after having satisfied my landlady, I repaired with a man, who carried my portmanteau, to a large furnished house where my new master lodged. I met at the door his steward, who asked me if I was not dame Estella's brother; and upon my answering in the affirmative, he said, "Signior Cavalier, you are very welcome: the Marquis de Marialva, whose steward I have the honor to be, has ordered me to give you a handsome reception. There is a chamber prepared for

you; to which, if you please, I will show you the way." So saying, he carried me to the top of the house, and shewed me into a chamber so small, that a very narrow bed, a chest, and two chairs, quite filled it. This was my apartment. "You will not be very much at large in this place," said my guide; "but, to make you amends, you shall be lodged in a superb manner at Lisbon." I locked my portmanteau in my chest, put the key in my pocket, and asked at what hour they supped. It was answered, that the Portuguese nobleman kept no table at home, but gave a certain monthly sum to each domestic for his board. I put other questions to him, and learned, that the people belonging to the Marquis were a parcel of happy sluggards. After a short conversation, I left the steward to go in quest of Laura, agreeably engrossed with the presage I had conceived of my new place.

As soon as I arrived at the playhouse door, and said that I was Estella's brother, I was immediately admitted. You might have seen the guards as eager in making a passage for me, as if I had been one of the most considerable noblemen of Granada. All the servants and door-keepers whom I met made me profound bows. But what I wish I could paint to the reader, was my serio-comical reception behind the scenes, where I found the company all dressed, and ready to begin. The actors and actresses, to whom Laura presented me, poured upon me in shoals. The men overwhelmed me with embraces; and the women, in

their turns, applying their painted faces to mine, covered it with white and red. Each desirous of being the first to make their compliment, they spoke all together: it was impossible for me alone to answer; but my sister came to my assistance, and her indefatigable tongue did not leave me in debt to any one.

The embraces of the actors and actresses did not suffice; for I was also obliged to undergo the civilities of the scene painter, the music, prompter, candle-snuffer, and his deputy. In short, of all the servants of the theatre, who, on the report of my arrival, came running to behold me. One would have thought that all these people were foundlings, who had never seen a brother before.

Meanwhile the performance began; and some gentlemen, who were behind the scenes, ran to their places; while I, like a child of the house, continued to converse with those of the actors who were not on the stage. Among these, I heard one called Melchior: I was struck with the name; I considered with attention the person who bore it, and imagined I had seen him somewhere. I at length recollected him to be Melchior Zapata, that poor stroller, who, as I observed in the first volume of my history, soaked crusts of bread in a spring.

Taking him aside accordingly, " I am mistaken," said I, " if you are not that Signior Melchior, with whom I had the honor to breakfast one day at the side of a clear spring between Valladolid and Segovia. I was in company with a

journeyman barber: we had some provisions in a knapsack, which being joined to yours, made up a pretty little repast, which was seasoned with a thousand agreeable sallies." Zapata, having mused some minutes, answered, "You mention a circumstance which I recal without difficulty: I was then returning to Zamora, from having made an unsuccessful attempt on the stage at Madrid: I remember too, that I was in very bad circumstances." "I remember the same thing," said I, "by this token, that you wore a jacket lined with play-bills. You see I have not forgot it, no more than that you complained at that time of having too chaste a wife." "Oh! I have no cause to complain of that at present," said Zapata, with precipitation. "Egad! my gossip is very much reformed in that particular; and therefore my jacket is better lined than formerly."

I was going to congratulate him on his wife's reformation, when he was obliged to leave me, in order to appear upon the stage. Curious to know his spouse, I made up to an actor, and desired he would show her to me. This he did; saying, "There she is; that is Narcissa; the handsomest of our ladies, your sister excepted." I immediately concluded, that this actress must be she in favor of whom the Marquis de Marialva had declared himself before he had seen Estella; and my conjecture was but too true. When the play was over, I conducted Laura to her lodging, where I perceived several cooks preparing a great enter-

tainment. "Thou mayest sup here," said she. "I will not, indeed," said I: "the Marquis, perhaps, will choose to be alone with you." "O! not at all," she replied: "he is to be here with two of his friends, and one of our gentlemen; and it is in thy own option to make a sixth. Thou knowest that, in the houses of actresses, secretaries have the privilege of eating with their masters." "True," said I; "but it would be a little too early for me to put myself on the footing of a favorite secretary: I must first enjoy his confidence, before I can merit that honorable privilege." So saying, I left her, and repaired to my eating house, which I intended to frequent every day, since my master kept no table at home.

CHAP. IX.

HE SUPPED THAT EVENING WITH AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN: AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THEM.

I OBSERVED in the hall a kind of old monk, clothed in coarse grey cloth, who was at supper all alone in a corner. Sitting down, out of curiosity, just opposite to him, I saluted him very civilly, and he showed himself no less polite. My pittance being brought, I began to dispatch it with a good deal of appetite; and while I ate in silence, I frequently looked at this person, whose eyes I always found fixed on mine. Fatigued with his stubborn perseverance in looking at me, I addressed him in these words: "Father, have we ever seen one another before? You observe me as if I was not altogether unknown to you."

He answered, with great gravity, "My reason for fixing my eyes upon you, is to admire the prodigious variety of adventures which are marked in the features of your face." "I see," said I, with an air of raillery, "that your reverence deals in metoposcopy." "I may boast of possessing that art," replied the monk; "and of having made presages which have been verified by the event. I am also skilled in chiromancy; and will venture to say, that my oracles are infal-

lible, when I have compared the inspection of the hand with that of the face."

Although this old man had all the appearance of a wise person, I thought him so foolish that I could not help laughing in his face. Instead of being offended, he smiled at my impoliteness, and continued speaking in these words, after having cast his eyes around the hall, to be assured that nobody listened: "I am not surprised to see you so prejudiced against two sciences which are looked upon as frivolous in this age. The long and painful study which they demand, discourages all the learned men, who renounce and decry them out of despair of acquiring them. For my own part, I am not discouraged by the obscurity in which they are shrowded, no more than by the difficulties which incessantly occur in the search of chemical secrets, and in the wonderful art of transmuting metals into gold.

"But I do not consider," added he, recollecting himself, "that I speak to a young cavalier, to whom my discourse must in effect appear quite chimerical. A sample of my skill will dispose you much better that all I can say, to judge more favorably of my art." With these words, he took out of his pocket a phial full of red liquor; and then said, "Here is an elixir which I composed this morning of the juice of certain plants distilled in an alembic; for I have employed almost all my life, like Democritus, in finding out the properties of minerals and simples. You shall see its

virtue put to the proof. The wine which we now drink at supper, though it is execrable, shall become excellent." So saying, he put into my bottle two drops of his elixir, which rendered my wine more delicious than the best that is drank in Spain.

The marvellous strikes the imagination; and when once that is gained, the judgment is no longer used. Charmed with such a fine secret, and persuaded that he must be more than the devil who could find it out, I cried, in a transport of admiration, "O, father! pray pardon me if I took you at first for an old fool: I now do justice to your capacity, and need no more than I have seen to be assured that you could, if you pleased, convert in an instant, a bar of iron into an ingot of gold. How happy should I be, could I possess such an admirable science!" "Heaven preserve you from such an acquisition," said the old man, interrupting me with a profound sigh. "You do not know, my son, what a fatal secret you wish for. Instead of envying, rather pity me, for having bestowed so much pains to make myself unhappy. I live in continual disquiet. I am afraid of being discovered, and that my labours will be rewarded with perpetual imprisonment. In this apprehension, I lead a wandering life, disguised sometimes like a priest, or monk, and sometimes like a peasant or cavalier. Is it then an advantage to know how to make gold at that price? And are not riches a real punishment

to those persons who cannot enjoy them in tranquillity?"

This discourse seeming to me very sensible, I said to the sage, "There is nothing like a quiet life: you give me a disgust to the philosopher's stone; and I will be contented with learning of you the future events of my life." "With all my heart, child," answered he. "I have already made my remarks on your features: let us now see your hand." I presented it to him with a confidence that will not do me much honor in the opinion of some readers; and he having examined it with great attention, exclaimed, in a fit of enthusiasm, "Ah! what transitions from grief to joy, and from joy to grief! What capricious successions of misfortune and prosperity! But you have already experienced a great deal of these vicissitudes. You have not a great many more afflictions to undergo; and a nobleman will confer upon you an agreeable destiny, not subject to change." After having assured me that I might depend on this prediction, he bade me farewel, and went out of the eating-house, leaving me quite engrossed with the things which I had heard. I did not at all doubt that the Marquis de Marialva was the nobleman in question; and of consequence, nothing seemed more possible than the accomplishment of the oracle. But though I had not seen the least appearance of probability, I could not have helped reposing an entire belief in the pretended monk, so much authority had he

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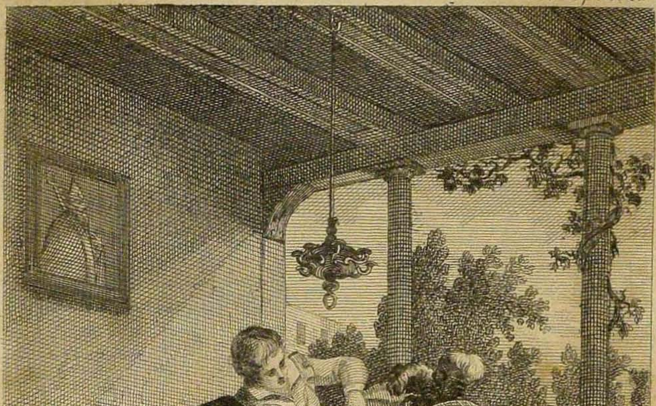

J. Smith, sc. 1 Clements Inn Strand

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acquired in my opinion by his elixir. On my side, that I might hasten the happiness that was predicted to me, I resolved to attach myself to the Marquis more than I had done to any of my masters; and having formed this resolution, I retired to our house in a transport of joy that I cannot express. Never did a woman leave a fortune-teller with more satisfaction.

CHAP. X.

THE COMMISSION THAT THE MARQUIS DE MARIALVA GAVE TO GIL BLAS, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THAT FAITHFUL SECRETARY ACQUITTED HIMSELF OF IT.

THE Marquis was not yet come home from the lodgings of his actress; and I found his valets de chambre playing at primero in his apartments, expecting his return. I made up to them, and we amused ourselves in making merry till two o'clock in the morning, when our master arrived. He was a little surprised to see me, and said with a gracious air, which made me guess that he returned very well satisfied with his evening's pleasure, "How, Gil Blas! not yet a-bed?" I answered, that I was first willing to know what orders he had for me. "I shall, perhaps," he resumed, "give you a commission to-morrow morning; but it will be time enough then to tell you the particulars. Meanwhile, you may go to rest; and henceforth remember, that I dispense with your attendance in the evening, having occasion for nobody but my valets de chambre."

After this explanation, which at bottom gave me a great deal of pleasure, since it spared me a piece of subjection which I should have sometimes felt in a very disagreeable manner, I left the Marquis in his apartment, and retiring to my garret,

went to bed; but having no inclination to sleep, it came into my head, that I should follow the advice which Pythagoras gives us, of recollecting all night all that we have done in the day, in order to applaud our good and condemn our bad actions.

I did not find my conscience clear enough to be satisfied with my conduct; but reproached myself with having supported the imposture of Laura. In vain did I suggest as an excuse, that I could not in honor give the lie to a girl, who had nothing in view, but to do me a pleasure, and that, in some shape, I found myself under a necessity of being an accomplice in the cheat. Little satisfied with this apology, I answered, that I ought not then to have pushed things so far; and that I must have a great deal of impudence to live with a nobleman whose confidence I so ill repaid. In short, after a severe examination, I concluded, that if I was not a rogue, I was next kin to it.

From thence passing to the consequences, I represented to myself, that I played a very high game, in deceiving a man of quality, who, for my sins, would perhaps soon discover the trick. A reflection so judicious terrified me not a little; but the ideas of pleasure and interest soon dissipated my fear: besides, the prophecy of the man with the elixir would have been sufficient to remove my doubts. I gave myself up, therefore, to the most agreeable fancies: I formed new rules of arithmetic, to reckon within myself the sum to

which my wages would amount at the end of ten years service. To this I added the gratifications which I should receive from my master; and measuring them by his liberal disposition, or rather by my own desires, I had an intemperance of imagination, if I may be allowed the expression, which set no bounds to my fortune. I was gradually lulled by so much wealth, and fell asleep in the very act of building castles in Spain.

Next day, I got up at eight o'clock in the morning, to go and receive my patron's orders; but, as I opened my door to go out, I was very much surprised to see him appear before me all alone, in his night-cap and morning-gown. "Gil Blas," said he, "last night, when I left your sister, I promised to be with her this morning; but an affair of consequence hinders me from keeping my word. Go, and assure her from me, that I am very much mortified at the disappointment; and tell her, I shall certainly sup with her in the evening. This is not all," added he, putting into my hand a purse with a little shagreen box enriched with diamonds, "carry this my picture to her; and keep this purse of fifty pistoles, which I give as a mark of the friendship I have already conceived for you." I took the picture with one hand, and the purse I so little deserved with the other; running instantly to Laura, saying, in the excess of joy with which I was transported, "Good! the prediction is visibly accomplishing. What happiness it is to be the brother of such a

handsome and gallant girl! What a pity it is, that there is not as much honor as profit and pleasure in it!"

Laura, contrary to the custom of people of her profession, being used to rise early, I surprised her at her toilet; where, in expectation of the Portuguese, she joined to her natural beauty all the auxiliary charms that the art of coquetry could bestow. "Amiable Estella," said I to her when I entered, "the loadstone of strangers, I may now sit at table with my master, since he has honored me with a commission which gives me that prerogative, and of which I come to acquit myself. He cannot have the pleasure of your company this morning, as he proposed; but, for your consolation, will sup with you at night: and he sends you his picture, which to me seems a matter of still greater consolation."

I accordingly gave her the box, which, by the bright sparkling of the diamonds that adorned it, infinitely rejoiced her eye-sight. She opened it, and shutting it again, after having considered the painting superficially, returned to the stones, whose beauty she extolled, saying with a smile, "These are copies which we women of the stage value more than originals."

I then told her that the generous Portuguese, when he entrusted me with the picture, had gratified me with a purse of fifty pistoles. "I congratulate thee upon thy good fortune," said she to me: "this nobleman begins where others even rarely

end." "To you, my dear creature," I replied, "I owe this present; the Marquis bestowed it upon me solely on account of my being your brother." "I wish," said she, "that he would give you as much every day: for I cannot express how dear thou art to me. The very first moment I saw thee, I attached myself to thee by a tie too strong for time to break. When I lost thee at Madrid, I did not despair of finding thee again; and yesterday, when I saw thee, received thee as a man whom fate brought back to my arms. In a word, my friend, heaven has destined us for one another; thou shalt be my husband; but we must first enrich ourselves. I want to have two or three more intrigues to make thee easy for life."

I thanked her in a polite manner for the trouble she intended to take on my account; and we insensibly engaged in a conversation that lasted till noon. Then I retired, to give an account to my master of the manner in which his present was received: and though Laura had given me no instructions on that subject, I did not fail to compose by the way a fine compliment, which I intended to repeat in her name. But when I went home, I was told that the marquis had gone out; and it was decreed that I should see him no more; as may be perceived in reading the following chapter.

CHAP. XI.

GIL BLAS RECEIVES A PIECE OF NEWS WHICH IS LIKE A THUNDERBOLT TO HIM.

I REPAIRED to my eating-house, where meeting two men of a very agreeable conversation, I dined and sat at table with them till it was time to go to the play; then we parted: they went about their own affairs, and I took the road to the theatre. I must observe by the bye, that I had all the reason in the world to be in good humor; mirth had reigned in my conversation with these two gentlemen; my fortune had a most smiling face; and, notwithstanding my spirits sunk, without my knowing the reason, and without my being able to keep them up, it was, doubtless, a presage of the misfortune with which I was threatened.

As I entered the green-room, Melchior Zapata came to me, and telling me softly to follow him, carried me into a private place, and addressed me in this manner: "Signior Cavalier, I think it my duty to give you a very important piece of intelligence. You know that the Marquis de Marialva had, at first, a passion for Narcissa, my wife; and already appointed a day to come and take a slice of my rib, when the artful Estella found means to break the bargain, and allure the Portuguese nobleman to her own charms. You may well believe

that an actress does not lose such a good prey without vexation. My spouse has this affair at heart, and is capable of undertaking any thing to be revenged: she has now a fair occasion. Yesterday, if you remember, all our servants crowded to see you; when the under candle-snuffer told some of the company, that he knew you very well, and that you was nothing less than Estella's brother.

"This report," added Melchior, "reached the ears of Narcissa, who did not fail to interrogate the author; and he has confirmed his assertion, by telling her, that he knew you Arsenia's valet, at the same time that Estella, under the name of Laura, served that actress at Madrid. My wife, charmed with that discovery, will impart it to the Marquis de Marialva, who is to be at the play this evening. Take your measures accordingly: if you are not actually Estella's brother, I advise you as a friend, and on account of our old acquaintance, to provide for your safety.. Narcissa, who demands but one victim, has allowed me to give you notice, that you may prevent any sinister accident by immediate flight."

It would have been superfluous in him to say more of the matter. I thanked the stage-player for his information: and he easily perceived, by my terrified look, that I was not a man to give the candle-snuffer the lie. I did not feel the least inclination to depend upon my effrontery; I was not even tempted to bid Laura farewel, lest she should have insisted upon my facing it out. I could very

well conceive that she was an actress of such skill, as to be able to extricate herself out of the dilemma; but I saw nothing except an infallible chastisement for me, and I was not so much in love as to brave it out. My sole study being, therefore, to escape with my household goods, I mean my baggage, I disappeared from the playhouse in a twinkling, and, with the utmost dispatch, caused my portmanteau to be transported to the house of a carrier, who was to set out for Toledo at three o'clock next morning. I could have wished to be with the Count de Polan, whose house seemed my only asylum; but I was not yet there; and I could not, without the utmost uneasiness, think on the time I had to stay in a city where I was afraid they would search for me, even in the night.

I did not, for all that, omit going to supper at my eating-house; although I was as much disturbed as a debtor, who knows that there are bailiffs at his heels. What I ate that evening did not, I believe, produce excellent chyle in my stomach. Being the miserable sport of fear, I examined every body that came into the hall; and when, unluckily, an ill-looking fellow entered, (a common case in those places,) I shivered with dread. Having supped in the midst of continual alarms, I rose from table, and returned to the carrier's house, where I threw myself on a truss of fresh straw, and lay till the hour of our departure.

Meanwhile my patience was sufficiently exer-

cised. I was attacked with a thousand disagreeable reflections: when I chanced to slumber, I beheld the furious marquis mangling the fair face of Laura with blows, and demolishing every thing in her house; or heard him order his servants to make me perish under the bastinado. Then starting, I awoke; and though to wake is usually a great comfort after such a terrible dream, waking was to me more dreadful than the dream itself. Happily for me, the carrier delivered me from my affliction, by giving me notice that his mules were ready. I was immediately a-foot, and, thank heaven! set out radically cured of chiromancy and Laura. In proportion as we moved from Granada, my mind resumed its tranquillity; and I began to enter into conversation with the carrier. I laughed at some pleasant stories he recounted, and lost insensibly all my fear. I enjoyed a sound sleep at Ubeda, where we lay the first night, and on the fourth arrived at Toledo.

My first care was to ask a direction for the Count de Polan's house, whither I repaired, very well persuaded that he would not suffer me to lodge in any other place: but I reckoned without my host; for I found nobody at home but the housekeeper, who told me that his master had set out in the evening for the castle of Leyva, having received a message that Seraphina was dangerously ill.

I did not expect the absence of the count, which diminished the joy I felt in being at Toledo,

and induced me to take another resolution. Finding myself so near Madrid, I resolved to go thither; reflecting that I might push myself at court, where a superior genius, as I had heard, was not absolutely necessary to make a fortune. The very next day, I took the advantage of a return-horse for that capital of Spain; and fortune conducted me thither, in order to make me act higher parts than those which I had hitherto performed.

CHAP. XII.

GIL BLAS TAKES LODGINGS IN A HOUSE WHERE HE CONTRACTS AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH CAPTAIN CHINCILLA. THE CHARACTER OF THAT OFFICER; WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE AFFAIR THAT BROUGHT HIM TO MADRID.

On my first arrival at Madrid, I fixed my habitation in a house that was let into lodgings, where lived, among other people, an old captain, who had come from the farther end of New Castile, to solicit at court for a pension, which he thought he had but too well deserved. His name was Don Hannibal de Chincilla. It was not without astonishment that I beheld him for the first time, being a man turned of sixty, of a gigantic stature, and extremely meagre. He wore a pair of whiskers, that curled up to his temples on each side. Over and above his want of a leg and arm, a large plaster of green silk supplied the place of one eye; and the scars of many wounds appeared on his face. These things excepted, he was pretty much like another man. Besides, he had a good deal of understanding, and still more gravity; was scrupulous in his morals, and, in particular, piqued himself on his delicacy in the point of honor.

After having conversed with him two or three times, he honored me with his confidence. I soon became acquainted with all his affairs. He re-

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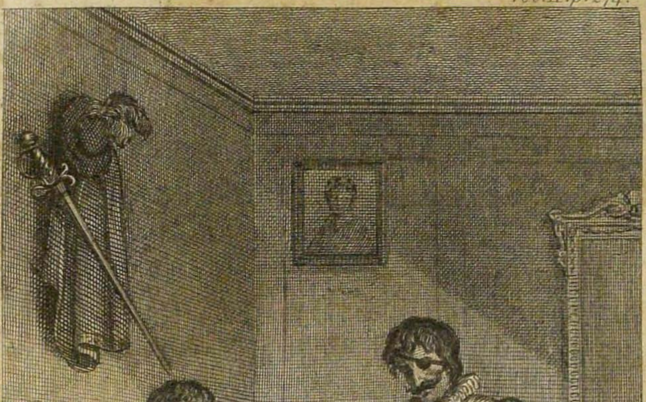

J. Smith, sc. 1 Clements Inn, Strand

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counted to me on what occasion he had left an eye at Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Countries. What I admired in his narration of battles and sieges was, that not one gasconade escaped him, nor even a word in his own praise; though I could have willingly pardoned him for boasting of the half of himself that remained, as an indemnification for the other half that he had lost. Those officers who return from the wars safe and sound are seldom so modest.

But he told me, the thing that gave him the most concern was, that he had spent a considerable estate in his campaigns; so that now his whole fortune was reduced to about a hundred ducats a year, which was scarce sufficient to maintain his whiskers, clear his lodging, and pay for the writing his memorials. "For, in short, Signior Cavalier," added he, shrugging up his shoulders, "I present one, thank God, every day, without being favored with the least notice. One would say, that there is a wager between the prime minister and me, which of us shall first fail; I in giving, or he in receiving them. I have also had the honor to present several to his Majesty; but the curate sings no better than his clerk; and in the mean time, my castle of Chincilla sinks into ruins for want of reparation."

"We must despair of nothing," said I to the captain: "you are now perhaps on the eve of seeing all your toils and troubles repaid with interest." "I ought not to flatter myself with that

hope," replied Don Hannibal; "three days are not yet elapsed since I spoke to one of the minister's secretaries, and, if I may believe what he said, I may make myself very easy." "And pray, what did he say?" I replied: "did he pretend that you were not worthy of a recompense?" "You shall judge," resumed Chincilla. "The secretary told me, very plainly, 'Master What-d'ye-call-'um, do not boast so much of your zeal and fidelity. You have done no more than your duty, in exposing yourself to danger in behalf of your country. The glory alone which attends brave actions, is a sufficient recompense, and ought to satisfy a Spaniard in particular. You must undeceive yourself, therefore, if you look on the gratification you solicit as a debt due to your valor. Provided it be granted to you, you will owe it entirely to the favor and generosity of the king, who is pleased to think himself indebted to those of his subjects who have distinguished themselves in the services of the state.' You see, by this," pursued the captain, "that I am still in its debt; and that, in all likelihood, I shall return as rich as I came."

One naturally interests himself for a brave man in adversity. I encouraged him to persevere, and offered to write his memorials gratis. I went even so far as to offer him my purse, and to conjure him to take out of it what money he wanted. But he was none of those who never wait for a second invitation on these occasions. On the

contrary, he showed himself very delicate on this point, and thanked me, in a lofty manner, for my good will. He afterwards told me, that, rather than be a burden to any body, he had accustomed himself, by degrees, to live so frugally, that the least nourishment was sufficient for his subsistence. This was but too true: his whole food consisted of leeks and onions; and therefore he was nothing but skin and bone. That he might have no witness of his wretched repast, he used to lock himself up in his chamber at meals. I obtained of him, however, by dint of intreaty, that we should dine and sup together; and deceiving his pride by an ingenious compassion, ordered more victuals and liquor than I had occasion for to be brought, and urged him to eat and drink. At first he stood upon ceremony, but at length he yielded to my intreaties. After which, becoming insensibly more bold, he, of himself, assisted me in clearing my plate, and emptying my bottle.

When he had drank four or five draughts, and reconciled his stomach to good nourishment, "Truly," said he, with an air of gaiety, "you are very bewitching, Signior Gil Blas; you make me do what you please; your behaviour divests me of all fear of abusing your beneficent disposition." My captain, at that time, seemed so well rid of shame, that, if I had laid hold of the opportunity of pressing him again to accept my purse, I believe he would not have refused it. But I did not put him to the trial; contenting

myself with having made him my messmate, and with taking the trouble not only of writing his memorials, but also of helping him to compose them. By means of having copied homilies, I had learned to turn a period, and was become a kind of author. The old officer, on his part, piqued himself on his knowledge of composition: so that exerting ourselves together, through emulation, we produced morsels of eloquence worthy of the most celebrated masters of Salamanca. But in vain did each of us exhaust his genius in sowing flowers of rhetoric in those memorials; it was no better, as the saying is, than sowing them on sand. Whatever expedient we fell upon to enhance the services of Don Hannibal, the court paid no regard to it: a circumstance that did not at all engage the old invalid to make the eulogium of those officers who ruin themselves in the field. In this bad humor, he cursed his fate; and wished Naples, Lombardy, and the Low Countries, at the devil.

To complete his mortification, it happened one day, that, under his very nose, a poet, introduced by the Duke d'Alva, having rehearsed, in the presence, an ode on the birth of an infanta, was rewarded with a pension of five hundred ducats. I believe the maimed captain would have run mad on this occasion, had I not been at great pains to recompose him. "What is the matter?" said I, seeing him quite beside himself: "there is nothing in this that ought to give you uneasiness.

Has it not been the privilege of poets, time immemorial, to make princes pay tribute to the muse? There is not a crowned head in the world, that does not gratify one of those gentlemen with a pension: and, between you and me, this sort of rewards being generally transmitted to the knowledge of posterity, immortalizes the liberality of kings: whereas the other recompenses which they bestow, are often but so much loss to their reputation. How many rewards did Augustus dispense, how many pensions did he grant, of which we have not the least intimation? But the most remote posterity will always know, as we do, that Virgil received near two hundred thousand crowns from the bounty of that emperor."

Notwithstanding all I could say to Don Hannibal, the fruits of the ode stuck in his stomach like lead; and as he could not digest it, he resolved to abandon the whole of his pursuit. But first, being willing, as his last effort, to present one other memorial to the Duke of Lerma, we went together to the house of that prime minister, where we met a young man, who having saluted the captain, said to him, with an affectionate air, "My dear old master, is it you! What affair has brought you hither? If you have occasion for a person of interest with his highness, pray command me; I offer to you my good offices." "How, Pedrillo!" replied the captain; "to hear you talk, one would imagine you enjoy some important post in this family." "I have, at least," an-

swered the young man, "power enough to be of service to an honest country gentleman like you." "If that be the case," said the officer, with a smile, "I have recourse to your protection." "It is granted," resumed Pedrillo. "Let me know what is the business, and I promise you shall get some snips out of the minister."

We had no sooner communicated the affair to this benevolent young fellow, than he asked where Don Hannibal lodged; in which being satisfied, he assured us, that we should hear of him next day; and then disappeared, without giving us the least hint of what he intended to do, or even telling us whether or no he belonged to the Duke of Lerma. I was curious to know who this Pedrillo was, that seemed so sprightly. "He is a young fellow," said the captain, "who served me some years ago, and who seeing me in want, left me to go in quest of a better place. I do not blame him for that; it is very natural for one to change for the better. He is a wag, who does not want understanding, and is as intriguing as the devil; but, in spite of all his art, I do not depend a great deal upon the zeal which he has expressed in my behalf." "Who knows," said I, "but he may be of some use? If he belong, for example, to some of the duke's principal officers, he may have it in his power to do you a service. You are not ignorant that every thing is carried, among the great, by cabal and intrigue; that they have favorite domestics, who lead them by the nose; and

that these again, in their turn, are governed by their own valets."

Next morning Pedrillo coming to our lodgings, "Gentlemen," said he, "if I did not explain myself yesterday, on the means I have of serving Captain Chincilla, it was because we were not in a place proper for such an explanation. Besides, I was willing to sound the business before I disclosed it to you. You must know then, that I am the lackey and confidant of Signior Rodrigo de Calderona, the Duke of Lerma's first secretary. My master, who is very much addicted to gallantry, sups every evening with an Arragonian nightingale, that he keeps encaged near the court. She is a very handsome girl, from Albarazin, of good understanding, and sings to admiration; therefore she is called Signora Sirena. As I carry a billet-doux to her every morning, I have just now seen her: I have proposed that she shall make Don Hannibal pass for her uncle; and on that supposition, engage her gallant to protect him. She is willing to undertake the affair; for, besides the small advantage she foresees in it for herself, she will be extremely glad to be thought the niece of a brave gentleman."

Signior de Chincilla made wry faces at this proposal, and expressed a reluctance in making himself an accomplice of such a prank; and still more, in suffering a she-adventurer to dishonor his family, by saying she belonged to it. He was disgusted at it, not only on account of himself,

but also perceived in it, if I may be allowed the expression, a retro-active ignominy upon all his ancestors. This delicacy seemed very unseasonable to Pedrillo, who, being shocked at it, exclaimed, "You jest, sure, to take it in that view! You are such a set of people, you cottage 'squires, your vanity is quite ridiculous. Signior Cavalier," he pursued, addressing himself to me, "are you not surprised at the scruples he makes? Egad! it is a fine thing, indeed, to stand on such punctilios at court! Fortune is never neglected there, whatever shape it assumes."

I approved of what Pedrillo said; and we harangued the captain so successfully, that we prevailed upon him, in spite of himself, to become Sirena's uncle. When he had gained this victory over his pride, we laid all our three heads together, in order to compose a new memorial for the minister, and it was revised, augmented, and corrected accordingly. I then wrote it out fair, and Pedrillo carried it to the Arragonian lady, who, that very evening, put it into the hands of Signior Don Rodrigo, to whom she spoke in such a manner, that the secretary believing her really to be the captain's niece, promised to exert himself in his behalf. A few days after we saw the effect of this our work. Pedrillo came to our lodging with an air of triumph: "Good news," said he to Chincilla; "the king is going to make a distribution of governments, benefices, and pensions, in which you shall not be forgot. But I am ordered

to ask what present you intend to make to Sirena. As for my own part, I declare I will have nothing at all. I prefer the pleasure of having contributed towards bettering my old master's fortune, to all the gold in the world. But this is not the case with our nymph of Albarazin: she is a little Jewishly inclined, when the business is to oblige her neighbour. She would take money of her own father; so you may judge if she will refuse it from a pretended uncle."

"Let her mention her demand," replied Don Hannibal; "she shall, if she please, have yearly one-third of the pension I obtain; and that ought to satisfy her, if the whole revenues of his Catholic Majesty were concerned in the bargain." "For my own part," replied Don Rodrigo's Mercury, "I would cheerfully rely upon your word, because I know the value of it; but you have to do with a little creature who is naturally distrustful: besides, she would much rather have, once for all, two-thirds of the product advanced in ready money." "Where the devil does she think I shall find it?" cried the officer, hastily interrupting him: "does she think that I am a money-broker? It seems you have not made her acquainted with my situation." "Pardon me," replied Pedrillo; "she knows very well that you are as poor as Job: after what I told her, she cannot be ignorant of your circumstances. But do not give yourself any trouble about the matter; I am a man fertile in expedients. I know an old

rogue of a lawyer, who takes pleasure in lending money at ten per cent. You shall make an assignment, with security to him, before a notary, of the first year of your pension, for the like sum, which you shall acknowledge to have received from him, and which you will touch in effect, the interest included. With regard to the security, the lender will be contented with your castle of Chincilla, such as it is; so that we shall have no dispute upon that score."

The captain protested that he would accept of the conditions, if he should be lucky enough to have any share in the favors which were to be distributed next day. And he was not disappointed; being gratified with a pension of three hundred pistoles on a certain government. As soon as he understood this piece of news, he gave all the security that was demanded, transacted his little affairs, and returned to New Castile with some pistoles in his pocket.

CHAP. XII.

GIL BLAS MEETS HIS DEAR FRIEND FABRICIUS AT COURT; THEIR MUTUAL JOY: THEY REPAIR TOGETHER TO A CERTAIN PLACE, WHERE A CURIOUS CONVERSATION HAPPENS BETWEEN THEM.

I CONTRACTED a custom of going every morning to court, where I commonly spent two or three hours in seeing the grandees pass and repass, though they appeared there without that splendor which surrounds them in other places.

One day, as I walked to and fro, and strutted through the apartments, making, like many others, a foolish figure enough, I perceived Fabricius, whom I had left at Valladolid in the service of an hospital-director. What astonished me was, that he talked familiarly to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis of Santa-Cruz. Nay, these two noblemen seemed to listen to him with pleasure; and he was as well dressed as a man of quality. 'Am I not mistaken?' said I to myself. 'Can this be the son of barber Nunnez? Perhaps it is some young courtier, who resembles him.' I did not long remain in doubt: the noblemen went away, and I accosted Fabricius. He knew me at first sight; and, after having made me squeeze through the crowd with him, to get out of the apartments, "My dear Gil Blas," said he, embracing me, "I am rejoiced to see you again.

How art thou employed at Madrid? Art thou still in service? Or hast thou some post at court? Give me an account of all that has happened to thee since thy precipitate retreat from Valladolid." "You ask me a great many questions at once," said I; "and we are not now in a proper place to relate adventures." "Thou art in the right," he replied; "we shall be more at liberty in my lodgings. Come, I will shew you the way; it is not far from hence. I am quite my own master; agreeably lodged, and perfectly easy in my circumstances. I am contented with my situation, and happy because I think myself so."

I accepted the proposal, and followed Fabricius, who stopped before a very fine house, where he told me he lodged. We crossed a court, where, on one side, there was a great staircase that led to very superb apartments; and on the other a small flight, equally dark and narrow, by which we ascended to the lodging he had so much extolled. It consisted of one room only, which my ingenious friend had divided into four by thin deal boards. The first served as an antichamber to the second, where he lay; he made a closet of the third, and a kitchen of the last. The chamber and antichamber were lined with maps and theses of philosophy; and the furniture was suitable to this kind of hanging; consisting of a large brocade bed, very much worn; old chairs, covered with yellow serge, garnished with a fringe of Granada silk of the same color; a table with gilt feet, covered with

leather that seemed to be once red, and bordered by a tinsel fringe become black by the lapse of time; with an ebony cupboard, adorned with figures coarsely carved. He had, instead of a bureau, in his closet, a little table; and his library was composed of some books, with several bundles of paper lying on shelves, placed above one another along the wall. His kitchen, which was conformable to the rest, contained some earthenware, and other necessary utensils.

Fabricius, after having given me time to consider his apartment, said, "What dost thou think of my lodging and economy; art not thou enchanted with them?" "Yes, faith," I replied, smiling, "I am so. Thou must have certainly played thy cards well at Madrid, to be so well furnished. Thou doubtless enjoyest some post." "Heaven forbid!" replied he. "The business I follow is above all employments whatever. A man of fashion, to whom this house belongs, gave me a room, which I have divided into four, and furnished as thou seest. I meddle with nothing but what gives me pleasure, and feel not the cravings of necessity." "Pray be more explicit," said I, interrupting him: you irritate the desire I have of knowing what you do." "Well," said he, "thou shalt be satisfied. I am turned author, and have commenced wit. I write in verse as well as in prose, and am equally good at every thing."

"Thou a favorite of Apollo!" cried I, laughing. "That is what I never could have divined.

I should have been much less surprised to have found thee in a quite contrary situation. What charms couldst thou find in the condition of a poet? Methinks these people are commonly despised in civil life, and are far from having an established ordinary." "O fie!" cried he, in his turn; "thou talkest of those miserable authors whose works are the refuse of libraries and players. Is it to be wondered at, that such writers are not esteemed? But good authors, my friend, are on a better footing in the world; and I may say, without vanity, that I am one of that number." "I do not at all doubt it," said I: "thou art a young fellow of excellent genius. That which is composed by thee cannot be bad. All that I am at a loss to know, is, how thou wert first seized with the rage of rhyme."

"Thy surprise is just," replied Nunnez. "I was so well satisfied with my situation while in the service of Don Manuel Ordonnez, that I did not so much as wish for any other. But my genius rising by degrees, like that of Plautus, above servitude, I composed a comedy, which was acted by the company who performed at Valladolid. Although it was not worth a fig, it met with great success; from whence I concluded, that the public was a good milch cow, which easily parted with its store. This reflection, joined to the furious desire of composing new pieces, detached me from the hospital. The love of poetry banished my passion for riches; and resolving to repair to

Madrid, as the centre of wit, in order to form my taste, I demanded my dismission from the director, who did not grant it without regret, so much affection had he conceived for me." "Fabricius," said he, "hast thou any cause to be dissatisfied?" "No, Sir," I replied; "you are the best of masters; and I am penetrated with your generosity. But, you know, one must follow his destiny. I find I am born to eternize my name by works of genius." "What folly possesses thee!" resumed the good citizen: "thou hast already taken root in the hospital, and art of that kind of stuff of which stewards, and even directors, are made. Thou art going to leave what is solid, in order to employ thyself in trifles; and thou wilt soon repent of thy imprudence, my child."

"The director, seeing that he opposed my design to no purpose, paid me my wages; and, over and above, made me a present of fifty ducats, as a recompense for my faithful services. So that with this, and what I found means to glean in the little commissions that were entrusted to my integrity, I was in a condition, on my arrival at Madrid, to appear in a very handsome manner. This I failed not to do: though the writers of our nation do not much pique themselves on their neat appearance. I soon became acquainted with Lope de Vega,*

* Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, a renowned dramatic poet, as much admired by the Spaniards as Shakspeare (with whom he was cotemporary) is by the English. He composed eighteen hundred pieces for the stage, in verse, besides many other works that proclaim the fruitfulness of his genius.

Miguel Cervantez de Saavedra,* and other famous authors; but, in preference to these great men, I chose for my preceptor, a young bachelor of Cordova, the incomparable Don Lewis de Gongora, the finest genius that ever Spain produced. He will not allow his works to be printed in his lifetime, but contents himself with reading them to his friends; and what is very remarkable, nature has endued him with the rare talent of succeeding in all kinds of poetry. He chiefly excels in satire, which is, indeed, his main strength. He is not, like Lucilius, a muddy river, that sweeps along with it abundance of slime; but rather the Tagus, that rolls over golden sands its limpid stream." "Thou drawest," said I to Fabricius, "an agreeable picture of this same bachelor; and I do not doubt that a person of such merit has a great number of envious enemies." "All our authors," he replied, "good as well as bad, inveigh bitterly against him. He delights, says one, in bombast, points, metaphors, and transposition. His verses, saith another, are as obscure as those which the Salian priests sung in their processions, and which nobody understood. Others again find fault with his composing sometimes sonnets, or romances; sometimes comedies, stanzas, and acrostics; as if he had foolishly undertaken to eclipse all the great masters in their own different ways. But all these efforts of jealousy are baffled by a muse that is

* Miguel Cervantez de Saavedra, the celebrated author of Don Quixote.

cherished by all ranks of people, from the highest to the lowest.

"It was under this skilful master that I served my apprenticeship; and, I dare say, it has appeared: for I have so happily imbibed his genius, that I have already composed some detached pieces which he would not blush to father. I opened my ware (according to his example) in the houses of the great, where I am wonderfully well received, and have to do with people who are not difficult to please. 'Tis true, indeed, my successful beginning has been of no disservice to my later compositions. In short, I am beloved by several noblemen, and in particular live with the Duke de Medina Sidonia, as Horace once lived with Mæcenas. You see," added Fabricius, "in what manner I was metamorphosed into an author. I have nothing else to relate; so that it is now thy turn, Gil Blas, to rehearse thy exploits."

I opened accordingly, and suppressing every trivial circumstance, gave him the detail he desired; after which, it being dinner-time, he took out of his ebony cupboard a couple of napkins, some bread, the remains of a shoulder of roast mutton, and a bottle of excellent wine. We sat down to table with all the gaiety of two friends who meet after a long separation. "Thou seest," said he, "my free and independent life. I might, if I would, go and dine every day with people of quality: but, besides that the poetic inclination keeps me oftentimes at home, I am a sort of an

Aristippus; and can equally accommodate myself to company and solitude, to affluence and frugality." We liked the wine so well, that there was a necessity of taking another bottle from the store; and towards the end of the repast, I expressed a desire of seeing some of his productions. He immediately searched among his papers for a sonnet, which he read aloud with great emphasis. Nevertheless, in spite of the charms of his reading, I found the performance so obscure, that I could not comprehend the meaning of one syllable. Perceiving my ignorance, "This sonnet," said he, "does not seem very clear to thy apprehension. Is it not so?" I owned to him that I could have wished it had been more plain. Upon which he fell a laughing at my expense. "If this sonnet," he resumed, "is not intelligible, so much the better. The natural and simple will not do for sonnets, odes, and other works that require the sublime. The sole merit of these is in their obscurity; and it is sufficient if the poet himself thinks he understands them." "You joke, friend," said I, interrupting him: "good sense and perspicuity ought to be ingredients in poetry of all kinds whatever: and if the incomparable Gongora writes not more plainly than thou dost, I confess my opinion of him sinks apace. He must be a poet who can never deceive any other age than his own. Let us now have a specimen of thy prose." Hereupon, Nunnez produced a preface, which, he said, he intended to prefix to a collection of co-

medies that he had then in the press; and having read it, asked my opinion. "I am," said I, "no better pleased with thy prose than with thy poetry. Thy sonnet is a piece of verbose fustian; and thy preface is composed of far-fetched expressions; words that have not the public stamp, perplexed phrases: in a word, thy style is quite peculiar to thyself; and the books of our best authors, ancient as well as modern, are written in a quite different manner." "Poor ignoramus!" cried Fabricius; "thou dost not know then, that every prosaic writer, who now aspires at the reputation of a delicate pen, affects that singularity of style, and those odd expressions, which shock thee so much. There are of us, five or six bold innovators, who have undertaken to make a thorough change in the language; and we will accomplish it (please God) in spite of Lope de Vega, Cervantez, and all the fine geniuses, who cavil at our new modes of speech. We are seconded by a number of partizans of distinction, and have even some theologicians in our cabal.

"After all," added he, "our design is commendable; and, prejudice apart, we are more valuable than those natural writers who speak like the common run of mankind. I do not know for what reason they are esteemed by so many persons of honor. Their manner was proper enough at Athens or Rome, where there was no distinction in point of speaking; so that Socrates said to Alcibiades, the people was an excellent schoolmaster: but at

Madrid, we have both a good and bad language; and our courtiers express themselves quite otherwise than our citizens, believe me. In short, our new style overtops that of our antagonists. I will, by one example, make thee perceive the difference between the gentility of our diction, and the flatness of theirs. They would say, quite plainly, for instance, 'Interludes embellish a comedy.' While we, with more spirit, would pronounce, 'Interludes create beauty in a comedy.' Take notice of that, 'create beauty.' Dost thou perceive all the brilliancy, all the delicacy, all the prettiness of the expression?"

I interrupted my innovator with a loud laugh. "Go, Fabricius," said I, "thou art quite an original with this thy precious language." "And thou," answered he, "art no better than a beast with thy natural style. Go," said he, repeating the words of the archbishop of Granada, "go, and tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats; and heaven direct you with that sum. Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas: I wish you a great deal of good fortune, with a little more taste."

I redoubled my mirth at this sally; and Fabricius, forgiving me for having spoken so irreverently of his writings, lost nothing of his good humor. We finished our second bottle; and getting up from table in a pretty good trim, went out with an intent to walk in the Prado; but passing by the door of a tavern, we took it in our heads to go in.

This place was usually frequented by good company: and I observed in two separate halls, a great many cavaliers amusing themselves in different diversions. In one, they played at draughts and primero; and in the other, ten or twelve persons were listening very attentively to a dispute between two professed wits. We had no occasion to go near them, in order to learn that a metaphysical proposition was the subject of the dispute; for they talked with such warmth and transport, that they looked like people possessed. I imagine, if Eleazar's* ring had been put under their noses, we should have seen devils issue with their breath. "Good God," said I to my companion, "what passion! what lungs! These disputants were certainly born to be public criers. The greatest part of mankind are misplaced." "Yes, truly," he replied; "these people seem to be of the race of Novius,† that Roman banker, whose voice ex-

* Eleazar, a famous mathematician, who cast out devils, by tying to the nose of the possessed a certain mystical ring, which the demon no sooner smelled, than he overturned, and abandoned the patient. He performed before the Emperor Vespasian; and, in order to show the power he had over the devil, commanded him to overset a pitcher of water. This the demon immediately complied with, to the astonishment of all present.

† Novius, whom M. Le Sage honors with the title of banker, was no other than a rank usurer, who, from being a slave, came to be a rich citizen of Rome. Horace, who has perpetuated his infamy, has also immortalized the loudness of his voice, in the sixth satire of his first book:

——— at hic si plaustra ducenta
Concurrantque foro tria funera magna sonabit
Cornua quod vincutque tubas —

ceeded the noise of carmen. But," added he, "what gives me the greatest disgust at their discourse, is, that our ears are stunned to no purpose." We removed to a distance from those vociferous metaphysicians, and by that expedient I prevented a violent head-ach, which had begun to seize me. We went and sat down in the corner of the other hall, whence, while we drank refreshing liquors, we examined the cavaliers as they came in and went out, as Nunnez knew almost all of them. "Egad!" cried he, "the dispute of our philosophers will not be soon over: here are fresh reinforcements arriving: these three men will engage in the fray. But seest thou those two originals going out? That little, swarthy withered creature, whose lank straight hair falls down in equal portions before and behind, is called Don Julian de Vellanunno; he is a young judge, who affects the beau. One of my friends and I going to dine with him the other day, surprised him in a pretty singular occupation. He was diverting himself in his closet, by throwing away his writings of a process, of which he is to make a report, and making a greyhound bring them back again to him, while the dog tore them to pieces very handsomely. The name of that licentiate with the copper nose, who accompanies him, is Don Cherubin Tonto, a canon of the church of Toledo, the weakest mortal in the world; though, by his sprightly smiling air, you would imagine he had a great deal of wit. He has bright, sparkling eyes, with an arch ma-

licious sneer; so that one would be apt to think him a wag. When he hears a delicate performance read, he listens with such attention, as seems full of understanding, and all the while comprehends nothing at all of the matter. He dined with us at the judge's house, where an infinite number of witty things were said; but he spoke never a word; though he applauded them with grimaces and gestures that seemed even superior to the sallies that we uttered."

"Dost thou know," said I to Nunnez, "these two shabby fellows, who, with their elbows on the table, sit in the corner, and converse together in whispers?" "No," said he; "their faces are quite unknown to me; but, in all likelihood, they are coffee-house politicians, who censure the government. Mind that genteel cavalier, who whistles as he walks through the hall, and supports himself sometimes on one foot, sometimes on another: that is Don Augustin Moreto, a young poet, who was born with some genius, but flatterers and ignorant people have almost turned his brain. The man whom he accosts is one of his confederates, who is also moon-struck, and rhymes in prose.

"More authors still!" cried he, showing me two well-dressed men coming in; "one would think they had made a rendezvous here, to pass in review before thee. These are Don Bernard Dessenguado, and Don Sebastian de Villa Viciosa. The first is a genius full of gall, an author born under the planet Saturn; a malicious mortal,

whose pleasure consists in hating all the world, and is himself beloved by nobody. As for Don Sebastian, he is a young fellow of candour, who will let nothing lie upon his conscience: he lately brought a performance on the stage, which had an extraordinary run; and now he has printed it, that he may no longer abuse the esteem of the public."

The charitable pupil of Gongora was going on in explaining the figures of this picture, which shifted so often to the view, when a gentleman, belonging to the Duke de Medina Sidonia, came and interrupted him, saying, "Signior Don Fabricio, I was looking for you, in order to let you know that his grace would speak with you immediately at his own house." Nunnez, who knew that a grandee's wishes cannot be too soon satisfied, quitted me in a trice, to go and wait upon his Mæcenas; while I remained very much astonished to hear him honored with the appellation of Don, and see him thus become noble, in despite of his sire, Master Chrysostom, the barber.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

SARASWATI

CHAP. XIV.

FABRICIUS INTRODUCES GIL BLAS TO THE SERVICE OF COUNT GALIANO, A SICILIAN NOBLEMAN.

I WAS so desirous of seeing Fabricius again, that I visited him early next morning. "Good morrow," said I, when I entered, "Signior Don Fabricio, the flower, or rather glow-worm, of the Asturian nobility!" At these words he laughed heartily. "Thou hast observed then," cried he, "that I am dubbed a Don?" "Yes, Mr. Gentleman," I replied; "and give me leave to tell you, that when you recounted your metamorphosis yesterday, you forgot the best part of it." "I did so," answered he: "but truly, if I have assumed that honorable title, it was not so much with a view to gratify my own vanity, as to accommodate myself to that of others. Thou knowest the humor of the Spaniards: they make no account of an honest man, if he has the misfortune to be both poor and mean born. I must tell thee too, that I see so many people call themselves Don Francisco, Don Pedro, or Don what-you-will, that if there is no cheat in the case, thou wilt allow nobility to be a very common thing, and agree, that a plebeian of merit honors it by his association. But let us change the subject," added he. "Last night I supped at the Duke de Medina Sidonia's, where,

among other guests, was Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman of the first rank: and the conversation turning on the ridiculous effects of self-love, I, charmed that I had it in my power to entertain the company on that subject, regaled them with the story of the homilies. Thou mayst well imagine they laughed heartily, and censured the archbishop as he deserved. This produced no bad effect for thee, for thou wast pitied by every body; and Count Galiano, after having asked a good many questions concerning thee, to which thou mayst believe I made suitable answers, desired me to bring thee to his house. I was just now going in quest of thee, to conduct thee thither. I suppose he intends to offer thee the place of one of his secretaries; and I advise thee to accept of it. The count is rich, and spends like an ambassador at Madrid. He is come to court, it is said, to confer with the Duke of Lerma, about the crown-demesnes which that minister designs to alienate in Sicily. In short, Count Galiano, though a Sicilian, seems to be generous, just, and open; and thou canst not do better than attach thyself to him: he is the man, in all probability, who is destined to enrich thee, according to what was foretold in thy behalf at Granada."

"I had resolved," said I to Nunnez, "to live at large a little, and enjoy myself a good while, before I should go to service again: but thou speakest to me of this Sicilian count in such a manner, as induces me to change my resolution,

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and even to wish I was already in his family." "Thou mayst soon be there," he replied, "or I am much mistaken." At the same time we went out together to the count, who lodged in the house of his friend Don Sancho d'Avila, then in the country.

We found in the court a great number of pages and footmen, clothed in a livery equally rich and gay; and in the antichamber several ushers, gentlemen, and other officers, all magnificently dressed; but withal so ugly, that they looked like a company of apes in Spanish garb. There are figures, both of men and women, on which all art is thrown away.

Don Fabricius having sent in his name, was immediately introduced into a room, whither I followed him; and found the count in his morning gown, sitting on a sopha, and drinking chocolate. We saluted him with all the demonstrations of the most profound respect; and he honored us with an inclination of the head, accompanied by such a gracious smile, as at once gained my heart. A wonderful effect, though an ordinary one, which a favorable reception from the great produces in our breasts! They must receive us very ill, indeed, before we be disgusted at their behaviour.

Having drank his chocolate, he amused himself some time in playing with a large baboon that sat by him, and was called Cupid. I do not know for what reason the name of that god was bestowed on this animal, unless it was because it had all his malice; for it resembled him in nothing

else. Such as it was, however, it did not fail to give vast delight to its master, who was so much charmed with its merry tricks, that he hugged it incessantly in his arms. Though Nunnez and I were not much diverted with the gambols of this beast, we feigned ourselves enchanted with its performances; which pleased the Sicilian so much, that he suspended the pleasure he enjoyed in this pastime, to tell me, "Friend, you have it in your option to be one of my secretaries: if you like the place, I will give you two hundred pistoles a year, without any other recommendation than that of Don Fabricio." "My Lord," cried Nunnez, "I am bolder than Plato, who had not courage enough to answer for one of his friends, whom he sent to the tyrant Dionysius. I am not afraid of bringing reproaches upon myself, by vouching for my friend."

I thanked the Asturian poet with a low bow, for his obliging confidence: then addressing myself to my patron, assured him of my zeal and fidelity. This nobleman no sooner perceived that I relished his proposal, than he ordered his steward to be called; to whom having communicated something in a whisper, he said, "Gil Blas, I will tell you presently what is to be the nature of your employment. Meanwhile, you may follow my steward, who has received orders concerning you." I accordingly obeyed, leaving Fabricio with the Count and Cupid.

The steward, who was a most subtle Messineze, conducted me to his apartment, where he loaded

me with civilities; and sending for the tailor who had equipped the whole family, ordered him to make for me, with all dispatch, a suit of clothes of the same magnificence as those of the principal officers. The tailor having taken measure of me, and retired, "As for your lodging," said the Messineze, "I know a chamber that will exactly fit you. But have you breakfasted?" added he. When I answered in the negative, "Ah, poor lad," said he, "why did not you speak? Come, I will shew you to a place, where, thank heaven, you may have what you will for the asking."

So saying, he carried me down to the buttery, where we found the butler, a true Neapolitan, every whit as cunning as the Messinian. It might be said of him and the steward, *these two make a pair*. This honest butler, with five or six of his friends, were cramming themselves with ham, cold tongue, and other relishing bits, which obliged them to redouble their draughts. We joined these hearty cocks, and assisted them in their attacks upon the count's best wines. While this scene passed in the buttery, another such was acted in the kitchen: the cook also treated three or four tradesmen of his acquaintance, who filled their bellies with rabbit and partridge pies: the very scullions enjoyed themselves on what they could pilfer; so that I thought myself in a house abandoned to pillage: yet these were but trifles in comparison to what I did not see.

CHAP. XV.

COUNT GALIANO INVESTS GIL BLAS WITH AN EMPLOYMENT IN HIS HOUSE.

I WENT to fetch my baggage to my new habitation; and when I returned, the count was at dinner with several noblemen and the poet Nunnez, who called for what he wanted with an easy air, and mingled in the conversation. Nay, I observed that every word he spoke afforded pleasure to the company. What a fine thing is genius! A man of wit can easily turn himself into all shapes.

I dined with the officers, who were treated pretty much in the same manner as our patron; and in the afternoon retired to my chamber, where I began to reflect on my condition.

"Well, Gil Blas," said I to myself, "thou art now in the service of a Sicilian count, with whose real character thou art utterly unacquainted. If we may judge by appearance, thou wilt be in this family like a fish in the water: but we must swear to nothing; and thou oughtst to distrust thy fate, the malignity of which thou hast but too often experienced. Besides, thou dost not know for what employment thou art retained: he has already two secretaries and a steward; what service then does he expect from thee? It looks as if he intended to make thee his Mercury. In good time! one

cannot be on a better footing with a nobleman, in order to make his way to a good post. He who limits himself to honorable services only, moves slowly, step by step, and seldom gains his point at last."

While I was engrossed by these fine reflections, a lackey came to tell me, that all the company who had dined at our house were gone home, and that the count wanted to speak with me. I flew instantly to his apartment, where I found him lying on his couch, ready to take his afternoon's nap with his baboon, which always bore him company.

"Come hither, Gil Blas," said he; "take a chair, and listen to what I am going to say." I obeyed his orders, and he spoke to me in these terms: "Don Fabricio has told me, that, among other good qualities, you possess that of attaching yourself to your masters; and that you are a young man of incorruptible integrity. These two qualifications determined me to take you into my service; for I have great occasion for an affectionate domestic, who will espouse my interest, and employ his whole attention in husbanding my estate. I am rich, it is true; but my yearly expense greatly exceeds my income. The reason is plain; I am plundered by my servants, and live in my own house as if I was in a forest among robbers. I suspect my butler and steward of having a fellow-feeling the one with the other; and this is more than enough to ruin me entirely. You

will say, if I have reason to think them rogues, why do not I turn them away? But where shall I find others made of a different kind of stuff? I will be satisfied with having them both observed by a man who shall have a right to inspect their conduct; and you are the person whom I have chosen for that commission; of which, if you acquit yourself well, be assured that you shall not serve an ungrateful master; for I will take care to procure for you a very advantageous settlement in Sicily."

Having spoke thus, he dismissed me; and that very evening, in presence of all his domestics, I was proclaimed superintendant of the family. This did not give the Messinese and Neapolitan great mortification at first, because they looked upon me as a jolly companion, of good composition; and concluded, that, by giving me a share of the spoil, they should be allowed to go on in their old course. But they looked very silly next day, when I declared to them, that I was an enemy to all misdemeanor. I demanded of the butler an account of the provision. I visited the cellar, and took an inventory of every thing he had in his charge; I mean table-linen and plate. I then exhorted them to be saving of our patron's wealth, to lay out with economy; and ended my advice, by protesting to them, that I would inform that nobleman of every thing that I should observe amiss in his house. I did not stop here: resolving to have a spy, who might discover if there was

any sinister intelligence between them, I cast my eyes on a scullion, who being won by my promises, assured me, that I could not have applied to a more proper person, to get notice of every thing that happened in the house; that the butler and steward were in confederacy, and burnt the candle at both ends; that they daily secreted one half of the provision that was bought for the family; that the Neapolitan took care of a lady who lived opposite to the college of St. Thomas; and that the Messinian entertained another at the Sun gate: that these two gentlemen sent all kind of provision to their nymphs every morning; and that the cook also dispatched savory messes to a widow of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood: and that in consideration of his service to the other two, to whom he was entirely devoted, he disposed, as they did, of the wines in the cellar: in short, that these three domestics occasioned a most horrible expense in the count's house. "If you doubt my report," added the scullion, "take the trouble of going to-morrow morning about seven o'clock to the college of St. Thomas, and you shall see me loaded with a basket, which will change your doubts into certainty." "So," said I to him, "thou art agent to these gallant purveyors?" "I am," he replied, "employed by the butler, and one of my comrades acts for the steward."

I had the curiosity to repair next morning, at the appointed hour, to the college of St. Thomas, where I did not wait long for my spy, whom I

saw coming along with a huge basket, filled with butcher's meat, poultry, and venison. I took an inventory of the particulars, of which I formed in my pocket-book a small verbal process, which I went and showed to my master, after having told the trencher-scraper that he might execute his commission as usual.

The Sicilian nobleman, who was naturally passionate, resolved, in the first transport, to turn away the Neapolitan and Messinian; but, after having reflected more coolly, contented himself with dismissing the last, to whose place I succeeded; so that my office of superintendant was suppressed soon after its creation; and truly I was not sorry for it; for it was, properly speaking, no other than the honorable employment of a spy, and a post which had nothing substantial in it; whereas, by being made steward, I became master of the strong-box, and that is every thing. The steward always possesses the first rank among the domestics of a great family: and there are so many small perquisites attached to his administration, that he may grow rich, even though he be an honest man.

My Neapolitan, whose budget was not yet exhausted, observing my brutal zeal, that I got up every morning to see and keep an account of what victuals were bought, no longer secreted a part; but the rascal continued to purchase the same quantity as before. By this stratagem, increasing the profit he drew from the refuse of the table,

which was his perquisite, he found himself in a condition to treat his charmer at least with dressed victuals, if he could not furnish her with raw provision. In short, the devil lost nothing in this reformation; and the count was not a whit the better for having the phœnix of stewards in his service. The superabundance that I then perceived at every meal made me guess this new trick, which I immediately defeated, by retrenching what was superfluous in every course. This I did, however, with such prudence, that the alteration could not be perceived; one would have thought that there was still the same profusion; and yet, by this economy, I considerably diminished the expense. This was what my patron required; he wanted to retrench, without appearing less magnificent; for his avarice was subordinate to his ostentation.

There was also another abuse to be reformed: I found the wine ran out apace: if, for example, twelve cavaliers happened to dine with my master, they would exhaust fifty, and sometimes five dozen of bottles. I was astonished at this waste; and not doubting that there must be some roguery in the case, consulted my oracle, that is, my drudge, with whom I very often had private conferences, and who made a faithful report of every thing that was said or done in the kitchen, where he was not in the least suspected. He told me, that the waste, of which I complained, proceeded from a new league between the butler, cook, and those lackeys who filled the wine, and who carried off all the bottles

half emptied, which was afterwards shared among the confederates. I spoke to the footmen on this subject, and threatened to turn them out of doors, if ever they should think proper to repeat this practice; upon which they were reclaimed. My master, whom I took care to advertise of the most minute things which I performed for his advantage, loaded me with praises, and grew every day more and more fond of me: and I, in order to reward the good services of the scullion, created him cook's assistant.

The Neapolitan was enraged to find me always on the catch with him; and was cruelly mortified with the contradictions he underwent, whenever he presented his accounts to me; for, that I might pair his nails the closer, I took the trouble of going to market to learn the price of meat, just before he went thither; and as he attempted to impose upon me afterwards, gave him a vigorous repulse. I was very well persuaded, that he cursed me an hundred times a day; but the subject of his maledictions hindered me from dreading their force. I cannot imagine how he could bear my persecutions, and remain in the service of the Sicilian nobleman. Doubtless, in spite of all my endeavours, he found his account in perseverance.

Fabricio, whom I frequently saw, and to whom I recounted all my hitherto unheard exploits in quality of steward, was more disposed to blame than applaud my conduct. "God grant," said he one day, "that thou mayst be recompensed for all

this disinterestedness: but, between thee and me, I believe it would not fare the worse with thee, if thou wast not quite so rough with the butler." "How!" answered I, "shall that robber charge in his bill ten pistoles for a fish that did not cost four, and I pass over that article?" "Why not?" he replied coldly: "let him give thee the half of the super-plus, according to custom. In good faith! my friend," continued he, shaking his head, "you are a mere ninny, and, in all appearance, will grow grey in servitude, since you neglect to flay the eel while it is in your hand. Take my word for it, fortune resembles those brisk airy coquets who despise the gallant that stands upon ceremony."

I only laughed at the discourse of Nunnez, who laughed again in his turn; and would have persuaded me that he had only spoke in jest, being ashamed of having given me bad counsel in vain. I continued firm in the resolution of being always zealous and faithful; I felt no inclination to be otherwise; and I dare say, that in four months I saved to my master, by my economy, three thousand ducats at least.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S ... TANJORE

CHAP. XVI.

AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS TO COUNT GALIANO'S BABOON, WHICH IS THE CAUSE OF GREAT AFFLICTION TO THAT NOBLEMAN. GIL BLAS FAL[illegible], THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS DISTEMPER.

ABOUT this time the repose of the family was strangely disturbed by an accident, which will seem trifling to the reader, though it turned out a very serious matter to the servants, and especially to me. Cupid the baboon of which I have made mention, that animal so beloved by our master, attempting one day to leap from one window to another, acquitted himself so ill in the performance, that he fell down into the court, and dislocated his leg. The count no sooner understood this misfortune, than he uttered such piercing cries, that they were heard all over the neighbourhood; and, in the excess of his grief, attacking all his servants without exception, he had well nigh made a clear house. His fury, however, was limited to cursing our negligencies, and abusing us, without sparing terms of reproach. He sent immediately for those surgeons who were most expert in fractures and dislocated bones; who having visited the patient's leg, reduced it, and applied bandages accordingly. But though all of them assured him there was no danger, my master retained one of them in the house, to be always near the animal, until it was perfectly cured.

I should be to blame if I passed over in silence the grief and anxiety which preyed upon the heart of the Sicilian nobleman during the whole time of the cure. Will it be believed, that all the day he did not stir from his dear Cupid? He was always present when it was dressed, and got out of bed to visit him two or three times every night. But the most troublesome circumstance of all was, that every domestic in the family, and I in particular, were always up, that we might be at hand, to be sent wheresoever it should be thought proper, for the service of this ape. In a word, we had no rest in the house till such time as this plaguy beast, having recovered of his fall, betook himself again to his usual caperings and tumblings. After this, can we refuse to credit the report of Suetonius, when he says Caligula loved his horse to such a degree, that he bestowed upon him a house richly furnished, with officers to serve him, and even designed to make him consul? My patron was no less charmed with his baboon, which he would willingly have created a corregidor, had it been in his power.

An unlucky circumstance for me was, that I had surpassed all the valets in demonstrations of concern, that I might, in so doing, make my court to my master; and undergone such fatigue in behalf of Cupid, that I fell sick upon it, and was seized with such a violent fever, that I lost my senses, and know not how I was managed for fifteen days; during which, I was in a manner be-

tween life and death. This only I know, that my youth struggled so successfully against the fever, and perhaps against the remedies that were administered, that at length I recovered my understanding. The first use I made of it was to perceive that I was not in my own chamber; and wanting to know the reason, I asked it of an old woman who attended me; but she replied, that I must not speak; for the physician had expressly forbid it. When we are in good health, we commonly laugh at the doctor; but when we are sick, we calmly submit to his prescriptions.

I thought proper, therefore, to hold my tongue, how much soever I longed to converse with my nurse; and was engaged in reflections on this subject, when two spruce beaus entered, dressed in velvet, with very fine ruffled linen. I imagined they were two noblemen, friends of my master, who, out of consideration for him, came to see me. On this supposition, I made an effort to sit up, and showed my respect by taking off my cap: but my nurse laid me all along again, and told me, that these gentlemen were my physician and apothecary.

The doctor coming to the bed-side, felt my pulse, considered my countenance, and observing all the symptoms of an immediate cure, assumed an air of triumph, as if he had greatly contributed to it; saying that there was nothing wanting to finish the work but a purge; after which, he might boast of having performed a fine cure.

When he had spoke thus, he made the apothecary write a prescription, which, while he dictated, he viewed himself in a glass, adjusted his perriwig, and made such grimaces, that I could not help laughing, in spite of my weakly condition. He then made me a solemn bow, and went away, much more engrossed by his own figure, than by the medicines he had prescribed.

After his departure, the apothecary, who had not come thither for nothing, prepared himself for doing something, which may be easily guessed; whether he was afraid that the old woman could not acquit herself with dexterity enough, or wanted to operate himself, in order to enhance the value of his ware; but, with all his address, I do not know how it happened, the operation was scarce performed, when I restored to the operator all that he had given me, and left his velvet suit in a fine pickle. He looked upon this accident as a misfortune annexed to pharmacy; and wiping himself with a towel in silence, went away, resolving to make me pay the scourer, to whom he was certainly obliged to send his clothes.

He returned next morning, more plainly dressed; though he had no risk to run that day, in bringing the physic which the doctor had prescribed the day before. For I not only felt myself mending every moment, but had such an aversion, since the preceding day, to physicians and apothecaries, that I even cursed the universities where

those gentlemen receive the power of slaying men with impunity.

In this disposition, I swore that I would take no more medicine, and wished Hippocrates at the devil, with all his gang. The apothecary, who did not mind what became of his composition, provided he was paid for it, left it on the table, and retired without speaking a word. I ordered the villainous medicine to be thrown out of a window immediately, being so much prepossessed against it, that I should have thought myself poisoned had I swallowed it. To this stroke of disobedience I added another. I broke silence, and told my nurse, in a peremptory tone, that I absolutely insisted on knowing what was become of my master. The old woman, who was apprehensive of exciting in me a dangerous emotion, should she gratify my curiosity, or resolving, perhaps, to irritate my distemper by her obstinacy, made no answer; but I persisted with so much passion, that she replied, at length, "Signior Cavalier, you are now your own master: Count Galiano is gone back to Sicily."

I could not believe what I heard, and yet there was nothing more true. That nobleman, the very second day of my distemper, fearing that I should die at his house, had the generosity to order me to be transported, with my little effects, to a hired room, where he had abandoned me, without ceremony, to Providence and the care of a nurse. In the interim, having received an order from court,

obliging him to repass into Sicily, he set out with such precipitation, that I was not so much as thought of; whether he already numbered me with the dead, or that people of quality are troubled with short memories.

My nurse informed me of all this: and likewise assured me, it was she who had called the physician and apothecary, that I might not perish for want of assistance. This comfortable news threw me into a profound reverie. Adieu, my advantageous settlement in Sicily! my sanguine hopes farewel! "When any great misfortune happens to you," says a certain pope, "examine yourself well, and you will always perceive that it was in some measure owing to your own fault." No disparagement to this holy father, I cannot see how I contributed to my own mischance on this occasion.

When I found the flattering chimeras, with which I had stuffed my imagination, vanished, the next thing that I concerned myself about was my portmanteau, which I ordered the nurse to bring to my bed-side, that I might examine it. I sighed when I perceived it open, crying, 'Ah! my dear portmanteau, my only consolation! you have been, I see, at the mercy of strangers.' "No, no, Signior Gil Blas," said the old woman; do not be uneasy: nothing is stolen from you: I have protected your box as if it had been my own honor."

I found in it the suit of clothes which I had when I came into the count's service, but I looked

in vain for that which the Messinian had ordered to be made for me. My master had not thought proper to leave it with me, or else somebody had made free with it during my delirium. All my other baggage remained; and even a great leathern purse that contained my money, which I reckoned twice, as I could not at first believe that there were but [illegible] pistoles remaining of two hundred and sixty, that were in it before I fell sick. "What is the meaning of this, good mother!" said I to the nurse; "my finances are terribly diminished." "And yet nobody, except myself, have touched them," said the old woman; "and I have been as frugal as possible: but sickness is very expensive: one is always laying out. Here," added the good mother, taking a packet of papers out of her pocket, "here is an account of the expense, as just as the current coin, which will show that I have not employed a maravedi amiss."

I glanced over the bill, which contained fifteen or twenty pages. Mercy upon me! what a quantity of poultry had been bought while I was out of my senses. There was in broths only to the amount of twelve pistoles at least. The other articles were answerable to this. It cannot be imagined how much was laid out for wood, candles, water, and brooms. Nevertheless, swelled as this account was, the sum total did not exceed thirty pistoles, consequently there ought to have been a remainder of one hundred and eighty. This I represented to her; but the beldame, with an air of

devotion, began to take all the saints to witness, that there were but fourscore pistoles in the purse when the count's butler gave her the charge of my portmanteau. "What is that you say, Goody?" cried I, with precipitation; "was it the butler who put my things into your hands?" "Without doubt, it was he," she replied; "by this token, that when he gave me them, he said, 'Good mother, when Signior Gil Blas is stiff, do not fail to treat him with a good funeral, for there is money enough in the portmanteau to answer the expense.'"

"Ah, damned Neapolitan!" cried I; "I am no longer at a loss to know how my money has gone: you have swept it away, to make yourself some amends for the thefts I hindered you from committing." After this apostrophe, I thanked heaven that the knave had not carried off the whole. Whatever reason I had, however, to accuse the butler of having robbed me, I could not help thinking, that the nurse might possibly have done the deed. My suspicion fell sometimes on one, sometimes on the other; but it was still the same thing to me.

I said nothing to the old woman; I did not even cavil at the articles of her unconscionable bill; for I should have got nothing but wrangling; and every one must understand his trade: my resentment, therefore, was contented with paying and dismissing her three days after.

I believe, when she went from me, she adver-

tised the apothecary that she had been dismissed, and that I was well enough to decamp, without taking my leave of him; for in a moment after he came to me, quite out of breath, and presented his bill, in which, under names that were utterly unknown to me, although I had been a physician, he had set down all the pretended medicines with which he had furnished me while I was out of my senses. This bill might be justly said to have been written in the true spirit of an apothecary, and accordingly we disputed about the payment of it. I insisted on his abating one half of the sum he demanded; he swore he would not abate one maravedi. Considering, however, that he had to do with a young man, who might give him the slip, by quitting Madrid that very day, he chose rather to be contented with what I offered, that is, three times the value of his drugs, than to run the risk of losing the whole. I gave him the money with infinite regret; and he retired fully revenged for the small disgrace he had suffered on the day of the clyster.

The physician appeared almost at the same time; for those animals are always at the tail of one another. I paid him for his visits, which had been very numerous, and sent him away very well satisfied. But, before he would leave me, in order to prove that he had earned his fees, he related all the mortal symptoms which he had prevented in my distemper; a task he performed in very learned terms, and with an agreeable air; though it was

altogether above my comprehension. When I had dispatched him, I thought I had got rid of all the ministers of the Fates; but I was mistaken: a surgeon, whom I had never seen, entered my apartment, and having saluted me very respectfully, expressed great joy in seeing me out of danger; a deliverance which, he said, he attributed to two copious bleedings that he had performed, and some cupping-glasses which he had the honour to apply. This was another feather to be plucked from my wing: I was fain to pay tribute to the surgeon also. After so many evacuations, my purse became so feeble, that it was little better than a lifeless corse, so little of the radical moisture remained.

I began to lose courage when I saw myself relapsing into a state of misery. I had, while I served my last masters, conceived too great affection for the conveniences of life, and could no longer, as formerly, look upon indigence with the eye of a cynic philosopher. I will own, however, that I was very much in the wrong to let myself fall a prey to melancholy. After having so often experienced, that Fortune no sooner overthrew, than she raised me up again, I ought to have regarded the troublesome situation in which I was as another introduction to prosperity.

BOOK VIII.

CHAP. I.

GIL BLAS CONTRACTS A GOOD ACQUAINTANCE, AND OBTAINS A POST THAT CONSOLES HIM FOR COUNT GALIANO'S INGRATITUDE. THE HISTORY OF DON VALERIO DE LUNA.

My not having heard of Nunnez all this time surprised me so much that I concluded he must be in the country: and as soon as I could walk, went to his lodgings, where I understood that he had actually gone to Andalusia, three weeks before, with the Duke de Medina Sidonia. One morning, at waking, Don Melchior de la Ronda came into my head; and remembering that I had promised him, while I was at Granada, to visit his nephew, if ever I should return to Madrid, I resolved to keep my promise that very day. Having got a direction to the house of Don Balthazar de Zuniga, I repaired thither, and asked for Signior Joseph Navarro, who soon appeared. When I saluted him, he received me politely, but coldly, although I had signified my name. I did not know how to reconcile this frozen reception with the character I had heard of this clerk of the kitchen; and was going away, with a resolution to save myself the

trouble of a second visit, when, all of a sudden, assuming an open, smiling air, he cried with a good deal of emotion, "Ah! Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, pray pardon the reception I have given you. My memory had betrayed my incli[illegible]n; I had forgot your name, and little thought that you was the cavalier of whom mention is made in a letter which I received from Granada about four months ago.

"How rejoiced am I to see you!" added he, throwing his arms about my neck with transport. "My uncle Melchior, whom I love and honor as a father, conjures me, if perchance I should have the honor of seeing you, to treat you in the same manner as if you was his son; and to employ, if there should be occasion, my own credit, and that of my friends, in your behalf. He has praised the qualities of your head and heart in such terms as would have interested me in your favor, even if I had not been engaged thereto by his recommendation. I beg, therefore, that you will look upon me as a man to whom my uncle has imparted, by letter, all his sentiments with regard to you. I offer you my friendship and I hope you will not refuse me yours."

I answered with that gratitude which I owed to the polite behaviour of Joseph; and, like people of warmth and sincerity, we contracted an intimacy on the spot; and I did not scruple to disclose the situation of my affairs; which he no sooner heard, than he said, "I undertake to procure a place for

you; and, in the mean time, do not fail to come and dine with me every day. You will fare better here than at your eating-house." The offer was too agreeable to a poor creature just come out of a f[illegible]llness, who had been used to good living, to be rejected. I accepted the invitation, therefore, and recruited so well in that family, that in fifteen days I had the face of a Bernardine monk. Melchior's nephew seemed to make up his pack rarely; but how could it be otherwise? He had three strings to his bow; was at the same time, butler, steward, and clerk of the kitchen: besides (our friendship apart,) I believe the comptroller of the house and he had a very good understanding together.

I was perfectly recovered, when my friend Joseph, seeing me come in one day to dine as usual, made up to me with a gay air, and said, "Signior Gil Blas, I have a pretty good place in view for you. You must know that the Duke of Lerma, prime minister of the Spanish crown, in order to devote himself entirely to affairs of state, entrusts two persons with his own concerns. Don Diego de Monteser has the care of gathering his rents; and his household expense is managed by Don Rodrigo de Calderona. These two men, in whom he can confide, exercise their employments with absolute authority, without the least dependence on one another. Don Diego usually keeps in his service two stewards to receive the cash; and as I understood this morning, that he had dismissed

one of them, I have been to ask the place for you. Signior de Monteser, who knows me, and of whose friendship I may boast, has granted it, without any difficulty, on my recommendation of your morals and capacity. We will go to his house thnatio-noon."

We went thither accordingly. I was very graciously received, and installed in the employment of the steward who had been dismissed. His office consisted in visiting the farms, keeping them in repair, and receiving the rents: in a word, I was concerned in the country estate, and every month gave in my accounts to Don Diego, who examined them with great attention. This was what I wished. Although my integrity had been so ill repaid by my late master, I was resolved to continue always in the same path.

One day having got notice that a fire had happened in the castle of Lerma, and that more than one half of it had been reduced to ashes, I went thither immediately to take an account of the damage; and having informed myself exactly, upon the spot, of all the circumstances of the fire, I composed an ample relation of it, which Monteser showed to the Duke of Lerma. The minister, notwithstanding the affliction he was in to hear such bad news, was struck with the relation, and could not help asking who was the author. Don Diego not only satisfied him in that particular, but also spoke so much in my favor, that his excellency remembered me six months after, on the occasion

of a story which I am going to recount, and without which, perhaps, I should never have been employed at court. Here it is.

At that time there lived in the street of the Infantas, an old lady called Inesilla de Cantarilla, whose birth was not certainly known. Some said that she was the daughter of a lute-maker; and others, that her father was a commander of the order of St. Jago. Be that as it will, she was a prodigy. Nature bestowed upon her the singular privilege of charming the male sex during the whole course of her life, which exceeded seventy-five years. She had been idolized by the noblemen of the old court, and saw herself adored by those of the new. Time, that spares not even beauty, had exerted itself upon hers in vain; though he had withered it, he could not deprive her of the power to please: and a noble air, an enchanting wit, and graces that were peculiar to herself, made her inspire the men with passion even in her old age.

One of the Duke of Lerma's secretaries, called Don Valerio de Luna, a cavalier of five-and-twenty, saw Inesilla, and fell in love with her. He declared himself in the most passionate terms, and pursued his prey with all the fury that love and youth can inspire. The lady who had her reasons for not complying with his wishes, did not know how to moderate his flame. One day, however, thinking she had found the means, she carried the young man into her closet, and pointing to a clock

that stood upon a table. "You see," said she, "what hour it is—on the same day and hour did I come into the world seventy-five years ago; and do you really think it becomes one of my age to be engaged in love intrigues? Recal your reason, my child; and stifle those sentiments which are so unsuitable both to you and me." At this sensible advice, the cavalier, who no longer acknowledged the authority of reason, answered the lady with all the impetuosity of a man possessed by the most violent emotions, "Cruel Inesilla! why have you recourse to such frivolous remonstrances? Do you imagine that they can change you in my eyes? Do not flatter yourself with such a vain hope. While you are such as I behold you, or while my view is fascinated by the charm, I cannot cease to love you." "Well then," said she, "since you are so obstinate as to persist in the resolution of fatiguing me with your addresses, my house shall be no longer open to you. I forbid you to come near it, and desire to see you no more."

You will, perhaps, believe, after this, that Don Valerio, disconcerted at what he had heard, made an honorable retreat. On the contrary, he became still more importunate. Love produces the same effects in its votaries, as wine does in drunkards. The cavalier begged, sighed, and making a sudden transition from entreaties to rage, attempted to enjoy by force what he could not otherwise obtain. But the lady resisting with courage, cried, with an

air of indignation, "Hold, rash wretch! I will soon bridle your impetuous ardor. Know that you are my son." Don Valerio was confounded at these words, which suspended the violence of his passion. But imagining that Inesilla spoke thus only to be rid of his solicitations, he answered, "You have invented that fable to elude my desires." "No, no," said she, interrupting him, "I reveal a mystery, which I should always have concealed, had not you reduced me to the necessity of disclosing it. Six-and-twenty years ago, I was in love with Don Pedro de Luna, your father, who was then governor of Segovia, and you became the fruit of our mutual passion. He owned you for his son, gave you good education; and although he had not been without other children, your good qualities would have determined him to leave you a fortune. I, for my part, did not forsake you: as soon as you began to appear in the world, I allured you to my house, in order to inspire you with that polite behaviour which is so necessary to a gallant man, and which women can only bestow. I did more; I employed all my credit to introduce you into the prime minister's service. In short, I have interested myself for you as I ought to do for a son. After this declaration, take your own measures. If you can purify your sentiments, and look upon me only as a mother, I do not banish you from my sight, but will treat you with all the tenderness I have hitherto preserved; but if you

are incapable of that effort, which both nature and reason demand, fly this moment, and deliver me from the horror of your presence.

While Inesilla spoke in this manner, Don Valerio remained in profound silence. He seemed to recal his virtue, and endeavour to vanquish himself; but he meditated another design, and prepared a quite different spectacle for his mother. Being unable to console himself for the insurmountable obstacle that opposed his wishes, he basely yielded to his despair; he drew his sword, and plunged it in his own bosom; punishing himself like another Œdipus; with this difference, that the Theban plucked out his own eyes, out of grief for having committed the crime; whereas the Castilian stabbed himself, because he could not commit it.

The unhappy Don Valerio did not die immediately of the blow he had given himself, but had time to repent, and ask pardon of heaven, for having taken away his own life. As he left, by his death, a vacancy in the post of secretary to the Duke of Lerma, that minister, who had not forgot my account of the fire, nor the good character he had heard of me, chose me to fill the place of this young gentleman.

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CHAP. II.

GIL BLAS IS PRESENTED TO THE DUKE OF LERMA, WHO RECEIVES HIM INTO THE NUMBER OF HIS SECRETARIES; SETS HIM TO WORK, AND IS SATISFIED WITH HIS PERFORMANCES.

MONTESER was the person who informed me of this agreeable news, and said, "Friend Gil Blas, though I feel some regret in losing you, I love you too well, not to be overjoyed at your succeeding Don Valerio. You will not fail to make a fine fortune, provided you follow two pieces of advice which I have to give you. The first is, to appear so much attached to his excellency, that he shall never doubt of your being entirely devoted to his will. And the second is, to make your court to Signior Don Rodrigo de Calderona; for that man moulds the mind of his master like wax. If you have the good fortune to acquire the good will of that favorite secretary, you will go a great way in a very little time."

"Signior," said I to Don Diego, after having thanked him for his good advice, "tell me, if you please, Don Rodrigo's character. I have often heard him spoke of, and represented bad enough; but I have not much confidence in the pictures which people draw of those who have posts at court; though sometimes, I believe, they do not judge amiss. Pray tell me, then, what you think

of Signior Calderona?" "You ask me a very delicate question," replied the overseer, with a satirical smile. "I would tell any body but you, without hesitation, that he is a very honorable gentleman, of an unblemished character. But I will deal more frankly with you; for, besides that I believe you a young man of discretion, I think it my duty to talk openly to you of Don Rodrigo, since I have advised you to cultivate him with care, otherwise I should only oblige you by halves.

"You must know then, that from a simple domestic of his excellency, when he was only Don Francis de Sandoval,* this man has arrived, by degrees, at the post of his first secretary. There never was a prouder man; he looks upon himself as the Duke of Lerma's colleague; and, at bottom, he may be said to share with him the authority of prime minister, since he bestows posts and governments on whom he pleases to oblige. This the public often murmurs at; but he gives himself no trouble about the matter: provided an affair yields him a handsome present, he bids defiance to censure. You will easily conceive, from what I have said," added Don Diego, "how you are to behave to such a haughty mortal." "Oh yes," said I, "leave that to me. It will be very unlucky, in-

* Francis de Roxas de Sandoval, Cardinal and Duke of Lerma, grandee of Spain by three several claims, was chief favorite and prime minister to Philip the Third, whom he governed with absolute power for many years, but was at last disgraced, October 4, 1618, and died seven years after, in his return to Valladolid.

deed, if I cannot gain his favor. When one knows the foibles of a person whom he wishes to please, he must be no conjuror if he fails of success." "Well then," replied Monteser, "I will now present you to the Duke of Lerma."

We went immediately to the house of that minister, whom we found giving audience in a great hall, where there was more company than at court. Here I saw commanders and knights of Calatrava and St. Jago, soliciting for governments and vice-royalties; bishops, who, being sickly at their own dioceses, desired to be made archbishops, only for the change of air; and some holy fathers, of the order of St. Dominic and St. Francis, who laid claim to the mitre with great humility. I likewise observed some half-pay officers, who acted the same part that Captain Chincilla had formerly performed; that is, spent all they had in dancing attendance for a pension. If the duke did not gratify all their desires, he at least received their petitions with great affability; and I perceived that he answered very politely to those who spoke to him.

We waited patiently until he had dispatched all these supplicants: then Don Diego said to him, "My Lord, here is Gil Blas de Santillane, that young man whom your excellency has chosen to supply the place of Don Valerio." At these words the duke, casting his eyes upon me, said, in a very obliging manner, "That I had already merited it by the services I had done him." He afterwards

carried me into his closet, to discourse with me in private, or rather judge of my understanding by my conversation. He desired to know who I was, and the life I had hitherto led, exacting of me a sincere narration of the whole. What a detail was this for me to give! There was no thinking of telling lies before a prime minister of Spain. On the other hand, I had so many things to tell at the expense of my vanity, that I could not resolve on a general confession. How should I extricate myself from this embarrassment? I took the resolution of embellishing the truth in those parts where it would have offended in its nakedness; but he did not fail to discover it, in spite of all my skill. "Monsieur de Santillane," said he, with a smile, when I had finished my story, "I see you have been in your time a little upon the picaro."* I answered, with a blush, "Your excellency ordered me to be sincere, and I have obeyed." "I am obliged to thee for it," he replied. "Go, my child; thou hast come off very cheaply. I am astonished that thou wast not undone by ill example. There are many honest people who would have turned great rogues, had fortune put them to the same trials.

"Friend Santillane," continued the minister, "forget thy past life; and remember that thou now belongest to the king, in whose service thou wilt be employed for the future. Follow me, and

* Picaro, a Spanish word signifying a rogue.

I will make thee acquainted with the nature of thy office." He carried me into a little closet adjoining to his own, where I saw, upon shelves, twenty thick registers in folio. "It is here," said he, "where thou must work. These registers compose a dictionary of all the noble families within the kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarchy. Every book contains, in alphabetical order, the abridged history of every gentleman; in which are recounted the services which he and his ancestors have performed to the state, as well as the affairs of honor in which they have been engaged. There is also mention made of their fortune, their morals, and, in a word, of all their good and bad qualities: so that, when they come to solicit favors at court, I see, with one glance of my eye, whether or not they deserve them. That I may have exact information of all these things, I have pensionaries every where, who take care to get good intelligence, which they transmit to me in writing; but as their memorials are often diffuse, and stuffed with provincial modes of expression, they must be rendered more concise, and the diction polished; because his Majesty sometimes orders these registers to be read to him. In this work, which requires a perspicuous style, I will employ thee this very moment."

So saying, he took out of a port-folio, full of papers, a memorial, which he put into my hand; and went out of my closet, leaving me at liberty to perform my *coup d'essai.* I read the piece, which

seemed not only stuffed with barbarous terms, but even filled with indecent passion; though it had been composed by a monk in the town of Solsona. He there tore to pieces, without mercy, a good Catalonian family; and God knows if he spoke truth: it looked so much like a scandalous libel, that I at first made some scruple of working upon it; being afraid of making myself an accomplice in the calumny. Nevertheless, novice as I was at court, I went on, at the hazard of his reverence's soul; and placing all the iniquity, if there was any in the case, to his account, began to dishonor, in good Castilian phrases, two or three generations of honest men, perhaps.

I had already finished four or five pages, when the duke, impatient to know how I performed, returned, and said, " Santillane, shew me what thou hast done; for I long to see it:" at the same time, throwing his eyes upon my work, he read the beginning with great attention; and seemed so well satisfied, that I was surprised at his commendation. " Prepossessed as I was in thy favor," said he, " I confess thou hast surpassed my expectation: thou writest not only with all the clearness and distinction that I desired, but the style is also spirited and easy: thou justifiest the choice I have made of thy pen, and consolest me for the loss of thy predecessor." He would not have confined my eulogium to this, had he not been interrupted by the arrival of his nephew the Count de Lemos, whom his excellency embraced several times, and

received in such a manner, as gave me to understand that he loved him with a tender affection. They shut themselves up together, to talk in private of a family affair, which I shall have occasion to mention in the sequel; and with which the minister, at that time, seemed to be more engrossed than with the business of the king.

While they were engaged together, I heard the clock strike twelve; and as I knew that the secretaries and clerks quitted their offices at that hour, to go and dine somewhere, I left my performance, and went out; not with a view of going to Monteser's house, for he had already paid my appointments, and I had taken my leave of him, but to the most famous ordinary at the court end of the town: a common eating-house would not now serve my turn. *Remember that thou now belongest to the king.* These words, which the duke had pronounced, were seeds of ambition that every instant sprung up in my soul.

CHAP. III.

HE LEARNS THAT HIS POST IS NOT ALTOGETHER WITHOUT MORTIFICATIONS. HIS UNEASINESS AT THIS PIECE OF NEWS, WHICH OBLIGES HIM TO ALTER HIS CONDUCT.

I WAS at great pains, when I entered, to let the landlord know that I was secretary to the prime minister; and in that quality I did not know what to order for my dinner: I was afraid of bespeaking something that might savour of parsimony, and therefore bade him dress what he himself should think proper. Accordingly he regaled me in a sumptuous manner; and I was served with marks of respect, which gave me still more pleasure than the good cheer. When the bill was brought, I threw a pistole upon the table, leaving to the waiters one-fourth of it at least; for so much remained over and above the reckoning. After which, I strutted away with such gestures, as shewed that I was mighty well pleased with my own person.

About twenty yards from hence there was a large house, in which noblemen that were strangers commonly lodged. Here I hired an apartment, consisting of five or six rooms handsomely furnished, as if I had already enjoyed two or three thousand ducats a year; and even paid the first month per advance. Afterwards, returning to

work, I spent the whole afternoon in continuing what I had begun in the morning. There were two more secretaries in a closet next to mine; but they only transcribed what the duke gave them to copy. With these I contracted an acquaintance that very evening, when we went out together; and, in order to gain their friendship the sooner, carried them to my tavern, where I ordered for supper the best dishes in season, with the most delicate wines.

We sat down together, and began to converse with more gaiety than wit; for to do justice to my guests, I soon perceived that they did not owe to their genius the places which they possessed. They were connoisseurs, indeed, in the different kinds of hand-writing; but they had not the least tincture of university education.

To make amends for this, they understood their own little interests to admiration; and were not so much intoxicated with the honor of serving the prime minister, but that they complained of their situation. "We have," said one of them, "already exercised our employment five months at our own expense, without touching one farthing; and, which is worse, our appointments are not regulated; nor do we know upon what footing we are." "As for my part," said the other, "I would with all my heart put up with twenty stripes, instead of appointments, to be allowed the liberty of engaging myself elsewhere; for I dare not retire of my own accord, nor demand my dismission,

after the secrets with which I have been intrusted; else I might chance to visit the tower of Segovia, or castle of Alicant."

"How do you make shift to live then?" said I to them. "I suppose you have fortunes of your own." They answered they had very little money; but, luckily for them, they lodged at the house of an honest widow, who gave them credit for their board, at the rate of one hundred pistoles a year from each. All this discourse, of which I did not lose one word, dissipated in an instant the fumes of my pride: I concluded that no more consideration would be paid to me than to others; consequently, I had no cause to be so much charmed with my post, which was not quite so substantial as I had imagined; and that, in short, I could not be too frugal of my purse. These reflections cured me of my extravagance. I began to repent of having invited my fellow-secretaries, wished the repast at an end; and when the bill was brought, disputed with the landlord on every article.

My friends and I parted at midnight, because I did not press them to stay longer. They went home to their widow, and I to my superb apartment, which I was now mad with myself for having hired, and which I firmly resolved to leave at the month's end. It was to no purpose for me to lie down on a good bed; my anxiety banished all repose; and I passed the night in contriving means of being paid by his majesty for my work.

I stuck, on this occasion, to Monteser's advice, and rose with a resolution of going to pay my respects to Don Rodrigo de Calderona. I was in a very proper disposition to appear before such a proud man, because I found I had occasion for his protection.

I repaired then to the secretary, whose lodging communicated with that of the Duke of Lerma, and even equalled it in magnificence: by the furniture, it would have been a difficult matter to distinguish the master from the man. I sent in my name, as the successor of Don Valerio; but, for all that, I waited in the antichamber upwards of an hour. "Mr. New Secretary," said I to myself at this juncture, "have a little patience, if you please: I find you must dance attendance yourself, before you make other people do so." The chamber-door being opened at length, I entered, and advanced towards Don Rodrigo, who having just finished a billet-doux to his charming Sirena, was putting it into Pedrillo's hands. I had never appeared before the Archbishop of Granada, the Count Galiano, nor even the prime minister, so respectfully as I presented myself to the eyes of Signior de Calderona, whom I saluted with a bow to the very ground, begging his protection in such submissive terms, that I cannot remember them without a blush. My meanness would have turned to my prejudice in the opinion of a real gentleman; but he was pleased with my

groveling behaviour, and assured me, obligingly enough, that he would let slip no opportunity of doing me service.

I thanked him with great demonstrations of zeal for his favorable sentiments of me; and having vowed eternal attachment to him, took my leave, for fear of incommoding him; and begged he would excuse me, if I had interrupted him in his important affairs. As soon as I had acted this mean part, I went to my office, where I finished the task which had been imposed. The duke, who did not fail to come thither in the morning, was no less pleased with the end than he had been with the beginning of my work; and said, "This is extremely well: write as well as thou canst this abridged history in the register of Catalonia; after which, thou shalt take another information out of the port-folio, and manage it in the same manner." I had a pretty long conversation with his excellency, and was charmed with his sweetness and familiarity of behaviour. What a difference was there between him and Calderona! There were two figures strongly contrasted.

I dined that day in an eating-house for a moderate expense; and resolved to go thither incognito every evening, until I should see the effect of my complaisance and servility. I had money sufficient to maintain me three months, during which I resolved to work at a venture; proposing as the shortest follies are the least prejudicial, to abandon the court, and all its tinsel, if I should re-

ceive no salary before the expiration of that term. This, therefore, was my plan. I spared nothing, during two months, to please Calderona; but he took so little notice of my endeavours, that despairing of success, I changed my conduct towards him, and exerted myself wholly in profiting by those moments of conversation which I had with the duke.

CHAP. IV.

GIL BLAS GAINS THE FAVOR OF THE DUKE OF LERMA, WHO INTRUSTS HIM WITH A SECRET OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.

ALTHOUGH his grace, to use the expression, only just appeared before me, and vanished again, every day, I insensibly rendered myself so agreeable to him, that he said to me one afternoon, "Hark'ee, Gil Blas; I like thy disposition and understanding, and have a regard for thee accordingly. Thou art a zealous, faithful young fellow, extremely intelligent and discreet; so that I do not think I shall misplace my confidence, if I bestow it upon thee." I threw myself on my knees when I heard these words; and, after having respectfully kissed one of his hands, which he held out to raise me up, answered, "Is it possible then, that your excellency can deign to honor me with such extraordinary favor? What secret enemies will your goodness raise up against me! But there is only one man whose hatred I dread, and that is Don Rodrigo de Calderona."

"Thou hast nothing to apprehend from that quarter," replied the duke. "I know Calderona; he has been attached to me from his infancy; and I may venture to say, his sentiments are conformable to mine, that he caresses those whom I

love, and hates those who disoblige me; instead of dreading his aversion, thou mayst on the contrary, depend upon his friendship." By this, I could plainly perceive, that Signior Don Rodrigo was a cunning rogue, who had got possession of his excellency's soul, and that I could not be too cautious with him. "To begin," added the duke, "with putting thee in possession of my confidence, I will disclose to thee a design which I have projected; for it is necessary that thou shouldst be informed of it, that thou mayst acquit thyself the better of the commissions in which I intend to employ thee. I have a long time beheld my authority in general respected, my decisions blindly followed, and commissions, employments, governments, viceroyalties, and benefices, disposed of according to my wish. I may be said to reign in Spain; and it is impossible to push my fortune farther: but I would secure it against the storms that begin to threaten me; and, to that effect, want to have my nephew, the Count de Lemos, for my successor in the ministry."

Here the duke, observing that I was extremely surprised at what I heard, said, "I see your surprise, Santillane: you think it very strange that I should prefer my nephew to my own son, the Duke d'Uzeda; but you must know, that this last has too narrow a genius to fill my place; besides, I am his enemy; he has found the secret of being agreeable to the king, who wants to

make him his favorite; and this is what I cann[ot] bear. The favor of a sovereign is like the possession of a woman whom we adore; a piece of happiness of which we are so jealous, that we cannot resolve to share it with a rival, however connected to us by the ties of blood and friendship.

"I now disclose to thee," continued his grace, "the very bottom of my soul. I have already attempted to ruin the Duke d'Uzeda with his majesty; and as I could not succeed, I have changed my battery. I design that the Count de Lemos shall insinuate himself into the good graces of the Prince of Spain. Being gentleman of his bed-chamber, he has an opportunity of talking with him every moment; and besides that he does not want wit, I know a sure method for him to succeed in that enterprise. By this stratagem, I will oppose my nephew to my son, and breed a division between the two cousins, which will oblige them both to court my support, the awe of which will keep them submissive to my will. This," added he, "is my scheme; and thy assistance will be very serviceable to me; for I will always send thee to the Count de Lemos, and thou shalt report from him whatever he shall have occasion to impart."

After this confidence, which I regarded as ready money, I no longer felt any disquiet. "At length," said I to myself, "I am under the spout; a shower of gold will certainly rain upon me; for

is impossible but that the confidant of the man, who, by way of excellence, is called the Great Pillar of the Spanish monarchy, should be in a very short time loaded with wealth." Full of such agreeable hopes, I saw with indifference my poor purse giving up the ghost.

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CHAP. V.

GIL BLAS IS OVERWHELMED WITH JOY, HONOR, AND DISTRESS.

THE minister's affection for me was soon perceived; for he affected to give marks of it in public, giving me the charge of his port-folio, which he used to carry in his own hand to council. This novelty making people look upon me as a small favorite, excited the envy of several persons, and was the occasion of my receiving a great deal of court holy-water. My two neighbours, the secretaries, were not the last in complimenting me upon my approaching greatness; and they invited me to sup at the widow's; not so much in return for my treat, as with a view to engage me in their behalf for the future. I was welcomed every where: even the haughty Don Rodrigo changed his behaviour to me, and now called me nothing but Signior de Santillane; though, before that, he only favored me with *you*, always omitting the term *Signior*. He loaded me with civilities, especially when he thought our patron might observe him: but I assure you he had no fool to deal with; I answered all his kindness with equal politeness; and the more so, the more I hated him in my heart: an old courtier could not have excelled me in this particular.

I likewise accompanied my lord duke to court,

whither he commonly went three times a day. In the morning, he entered his majesty's bed-chamber as soon as he was awake; and kneeling by the bedside, discoursed of those things that were to be done in the day: having also dictated to his master what was to be said, he retired; and returned immediately after dinner, not to talk on state affairs, but to converse on entertaining subjects, and regale the king with all the merry adventures which happened in Madrid, and of which he was always very early informed. Last of all, he visited him for the third time in the evening, when he gave such an account as he thought proper of what he had done through the day, and in a careless manner asked his majesty's orders for the next day. While he was with the king, I remained in the antichamber, where I saw people of quality, devoted to the idol Favor, court my conversation, and think themselves happy if I entered into discourse with them. How, after this, could I help thinking myself a man of consequence? There are a great many at court who have the same opinion of themselves upon a much more slender foundation.

One day I had still more food for my vanity. The king, to whom the duke had spoke very advantageously of my style, was very curious to see a specimen of it. Upon which, his excellency made me take up the Catalonian register, and carrying me into his presence, ordered me to read the first story which I had abridged. If I was at first dis-

turbed by the presence of the prince, I was soon composed by that of the minister, and read my performance, which his majesty heard with pleasure. He expressed his satisfaction, and even recommended me to the minister's protection. This did not at all diminish the pride of my heart; and the conversation which I had a few days after with the Count de Lemos quite filled my head with the ideas of ambition. I went to this nobleman from his uncle, and finding him at the prince's court, presented to him a letter of credentials; in which the duke told him, that he might open himself to me, as to one who was perfectly well acquainted with their design, and chosen by him as their common messenger. The count having read this billet, conducted me into a room, and having locked the door, spoke in this manner: "Since you enjoy the confidence of the Duke of Lerma, I do not doubt that you deserve it; and I ought to make no difficulty in giving you mine also. You must know then that matters go on swimmingly. The Prince of Spain distinguishes me from all the noblemen who are personally attached to him, and who study to please him. I had this morning a private conversation with him, in which he seemed chagrined at seeing himself, through the king's avarice, unable to follow the dictates of his generous heart, or even to spend like a prince. On this occasion, I did not fail to lament his situation; and profiting by the opportunity, promised to bring a thousand pistoles to

him at his levee to-morrow, as an earnest of greater sums which I have undertaken to furnish him with in a very little time. He was charmed with my promise; and I am certain of captivating his favor, if I keep my word. Go and tell these circumstances to my uncle, and return in the evening, to inform me of his sentiments of the matter."

I quitted the Count de Lemos immediately, and went back to the Duke of Lerma, who, on my report, sent to Calderona for a thousand pistoles, which he gave me to carry in the evening to the count. This I performed; saying to myself, "Oho! I now see plainly what the infallible method is which the minister takes to succeed in his enterprise: upon my soul! he is in the right; and, to all appearance, these prodigalities will not ruin his fortune. I can easily guess from whose coffers these pistoles are taken; but, after all, it is but reasonable that the father should maintain the son." The Count de Lemos, when we parted, said softly, "Farewel, dear confidant. The Prince of Spain is a little amorous: you and I must have a conference on that subject one of these days: I foresee that I shall have occasion for your dexterity very soon." I came home musing on these words, which were not at all ambiguous, and which filled me with joy. "The devil!" said I, "I am just on the eve of becoming Mercury to the heir of the kingdom." I did not examine into the goodness or badness of the office; the quality of the gallant laid my virtue asleep. What glory

was it for me to be made minister of pleasure to a great prince! "Softly, Mr. Gil Blas," some folks will say, "the business was only to make you deputy-minister." I own it: but at bottom the honor of both these posts is equal, the difference lies in the profits only.

While I executed these noble commissions, advancing every day farther and farther in the good graces of the prime minister, with such enchanting hopes, how happy should I have been, if ambition had secured me from the cravings of hunger! More than two months had elapsed since I had quitted my magnificent apartment, and hired a small chamber, very frugally furnished. Although this gave me some pain, as I came out early in the morning, and did not go home to bed before night, I bore my fortune patiently. The whole day I appeared upon my theatre, that is, in the duke's house, and played the part of a man of consequence: but when I had crept up into my garret, my importance vanished, and nothing remained but poor Gil Blas without money; and, which was worse, without any thing that would fetch it. Though I had not been too proud to discover my necessity to any body, I did not know one person that could assist me, except Navarro, whom I had neglected so much since I turned courtier, that I had not assurance enough to make application to his friendship. I had been obliged to sell all my clothes piece-meal, except those for which I had absolute occasion. I went no more to the eating-

house, because I had not wherewithal to pay my ordinary. How did I make shift then to subsist? Every morning, a little bread and wine was brought into our offices for breakfast: this was all that the minister allowed; this was all I ate through the day; and I generally went supperless to bed.

Such was the situation of a man who shone at court, and who was more properly an object of compassion than envy. Nevertheless, I could no longer sustain the weight of my misery; and at length determined to disclose it, with address, to the Duke of Lerma, as soon as opportunity should offer. Happily for me, I found an occasion at the Escurial,* whither the king and the prince repaired some days after I had come to this resolution.

* Escurial, a royal palace about six leagues from Madrid, built by Philip the Second, King of Spain, who in his life-time expended no less than 5,270,000 ducats in finishing and adorning this magnificent work. Here too is a chapel, in which are the tombs of all the Spanish monarchs, from Charles the Fifth, to the present time.

CHAP. VI.

THE MANNER IN WHICH GIL BLAS INFORMS THE DUKE OF LERMA OF HIS NECESSITY, AND THAT MINISTER'S BEHAVIOUR ON THE OCCASION.

WHILE the king was at the Escurial, he defrayed the expense of every body; so that there I did not feel where the shoe pinched. I lay in a wardrobe just by the bed-chamber of the duke; who one morning, rising as usual at break of day, made me take some papers, and a standish, and follow him into the palace garden. We went and sat down under a tuft of trees, where I put myself, by his order, into the posture of a man writing on the crown of his hat; while he held in his hand a paper, which he pretended to read; so that, at a distance, we seemed busy in very serious affairs, though all the while we talked of nothing but trifles.

For the space of an hour, I had diverted his excellency with all the sallies that my good humor could afford, when two magpies perching on the trees under which we sat, began to chatter in such a noisy manner, as attracted our attention. "These birds," said the duke, "seem to scold one another: I should be very glad to know the cause of their quarrel." "My Lord," said I, "your curiosity puts me in mind of an Indian fable which I have

read in Pilpay, or some other author of that kind." The minister desired to hear it, and I recounted it in these words.

"Heretofore a good monarch reigned in Persia, whose genius being not quite extensive enough to govern his kingdom of himself, he left that care to his grand vizir Atalmuc; a man of superior capacity, who supported the weight of that vast monarchy without stooping, and maintained it in profound peace. He had even the art of making the royal authority loved, as well as feared; and the subjects enjoyed an affectionate father in a vizir, who was faithful to his prince. Atalmuc had, among his secretaries, a young Cachemirian, called Zeangir, whom he loved more than all the others. He took pleasure in his conversation, carried him in his company to the chase, and even disclosed to him his most secret thoughts. One day, while they hunted together in a wood, the vizir seeing two ravens croaking on a tree, said to his secretary, 'I wish I knew what these birds are talking of in their language.' 'Signior,' answered the Cachemirian, 'your wish may be accomplished.' 'How can that be?' replied Atalmuc. 'A cabalistical dervise,' said Zeangir, 'taught me the language of birds. If you please, I will listen to these, and repeat to you verbatim every thing that I shall hear.'

"The vizir consented: and the Cachemirian approaching the ravens, seemed to lend an attentive ear to their discourse: after which, returning

to his master, 'Signior,' said he, 'would you believe it? We are the subject of their conversation.' 'Impossible!' cried the Persian minister: 'What can they say of us?' 'One of them,' replied the secretary, 'said, Behold the grand vizir Atalmuc in person, that tutelary eagle, who covers Persia like a nest with his wings, and incessantly watches for its preservation. As a relaxation from his painful toils, he hunts in this wood with his faithful Zeangir. How happy is that secretary in serving a master that has so much affection for him!' 'Softly,' said the other raven, 'softly; do not too much extol the happiness of that Cachemirian. Atalmuc, it is true, converses familiarly with him, honors him with his confidence, and I do not doubt intends to give him a considerable post: but, before that happens, Zeangir will die of hunger. The poor devil lodges in a small paltry room, where he is in want of the common necessaries of life. In a word, he lives in a miserable manner, though nobody at court perceives it. The grand vizir never thinks of inquiring into his circumstances; but content with entertaining favorable sentiments in his behalf, leaves him, in the mean time, a prey to poverty.'"

Here I left off speaking, in order to observe the duke, who asked, with a smile, what impression the apologue made on the mind of Atalmuc, and if the grand vizir was not offended at the presumption of his secretary. "No, my Lord," said I, in great confusion at this question; "the fable

says, that, on the contrary, he loaded him with favors." "That was lucky," replied the duke, with a serious air; "some ministers would not like to be so schooled. But," added he, breaking off the discourse, and getting up, "I believe the king will soon be awake, and my duty obliges me to be near him." So saying, he walked hastily towards the palace, without speaking another word, and very ill pleased, as I imagined, with the Indian fable.

I followed him to the very door of his majesty's bed-chamber; after which, I went and put the papers into the place from whence I had taken them, and then entered the closet where our two copying secretaries were at work; for they were also along with us. "What is the matter with you, Signior de Santillane?" said they, when they saw me: "you seem very much disturbed. Has any disagreeable accident happened to you?"

I was too much affected with the bad success of my apologue to conceal my grief: I recounted to them what I had said to the duke; and they expressed their sympathy in the sharp affliction with which I was seized. "You have great reason to be grieved," said one of them: "I wish you may be better treated than the secretary of Cardinal Spinola, who, tired with having received nothing during fifteen months, in which he was employed by his eminence, took the liberty, one day, of representing his necessity, and craving some money for his subsistence. 'It is but just,' said the

banished them entirely; he was very serious with me, contrary to custom, and scarce spoke at all; a circumstance that threw me into mortal disquiet for the rest of the day: neither did I pass the night in more tranquillity; my sorrow for seeing all my agreeable illusions vanish, and the dread of increasing the number of state prisoners, made me groan and lament my condition till morning.

The next day was the crisis of my fate. The duke ordered me to be called in the morning, and I entered his chamber trembling like a criminal who was going to receive sentence. "Santillane," said he, shewing me a paper, which he held in his hand, "take this order." I quaked at the word order, saying to myself, 'O heaven! behold Cardinal Spinola! The carriage is ready for Segovia.' The terror which seized me was such, that I interrupted the minister, and throwing myself at his feet, "My Lord," said I, all in tears, "I most humbly beg that your excellency will pardon my presumption; it was necessity alone that compelled me to disclose my situation."

The duke, who could not help laughing at my disorder, answered, "Be comforted, Gil Blas, and listen to what I am going to say. Although the discovering thy necessities was a reproach to me, for not having prevented them, I am not at all disobliged, my friend; I am rather angry with myself for having omitted to ask how thou livest. But, to begin with making amends for this inattention, I give thee this order for fifteen hundred

minister, 'that you should be paid. Here,' added he, giving him an order for a thousand ducats, go and receive that sum from the royal treasury; but remember, at the same time, that I have no further occasion for your service.' The secretary would have consoled himself for his dismission, had he touched his thousand ducats, and been allowed to seek for business elsewhere; but just as he went out of the cardinal's house, he was arrested by an alguazil, and conducted to the tower of Segovia, where he has been prisoner a long time."

This touch of history redoubled my fear: I believed myself undone; and becoming inconsolable, began to reproach my own impatience, as if I had not suffered enough. 'Alas!' said I, 'why did I risk that unlucky fable which has displeased the minister? Perhaps he was just on the point of extricating me out of my miserable situation; nay, perhaps I was on the eve of making one of those sudden fortunes which astonish mankind. What riches, what honors have I lost by my own folly! I ought to have considered, that great men do not choose to be anticipated, but desire that the least gratifications they are obliged to give, should be received as their own free grace and favor. It would have been better for me to continue my slender regimen, without complaining to the duke, and even to let myself die of hunger, by which means the blame would have lain on his side.'

If I had even preserved the sparks of hope, my master, whom I saw in the afternoon, would have

ducats, which will be paid upon sight out of the royal treasury. This is not all; I promise thee the same sum annually; and besides, when people of wealth and generosity solicit thy interest, I do not forbid thee to speak in their behalf."

In the ecstacy occasioned by these words, I kissed the feet of the minister, who, having commanded me to rise, continued to discourse with me in a familiar manner. I attempted to recal my good humor, but I could not make such a sudden transition from grief to joy; I was as much confounded as a wretch who is informed of his pardon in the very minute when he expects his execution. My master ascribed all this agitation to the fear of having incurred his displeasure, though the dread of perpetual imprisonment had no less a share in my discomposure. He confessed that he had affected coolness towards me, to see whether or not I should be afflicted at the change; that from this he was convinced of my sincere attachment to his person, for which he loved me the more.

CHAP. VII.

THE GOOD USE TO WHICH HE PUT HIS FIFTEEN HUNDRED DUCATS; THE FIRST AFFAIR IN WHICH HE INTERMEDDLED, AND THE PROFIT FROM THENCE ACCRUING.

The king, as if he had intended to gratify my impatience, returned the very next day to Madrid; upon which, I flew instantly to the royal treasury, where I immediately touched the sum contained in my order. I now listened to nothing but my vanity and ambition. I abandoned my miserable room to those secretaries who are still ignorant of the language of birds, and once more hired my fine apartment, which was luckily untenanted. I sent for a famous tailor, who worked for almost all the beaus; he took my measure, and carried me to a shop, where he took off five ells of cloth, which, he said, was barely sufficient to make a suit for me. Five ells for a suit of a Spanish taste! just heaven!—But let us spare our censure. Tailors of reputation always use more than others. I then bought some linen, which I wanted very much, silk stockings, and a beaver laced with point d'Espagne. This being done, I thought it would not look well for me to be without a lackey, and desired Vincent Forero, my landlord, to accommodate me with one of his own recommendation. Most of the strangers who lodged with him, used, on their

arrival at Madrid, to take Spanish valets into their service, by which means his house was the rendezvous of all the lackeys out of place. The first that presented himself, was a young fellow of such a soft, devout appearance, that I would have nothing to do with him; he looked too much like Ambrose de Lamela. "I do not want," said I to Forero, "a valet of such a religious deportment; I have been already bit by such another." Scarce had I dismissed this lackey, when another came in, of a very sprightly appearance, as impudent as a court page, with something roguish in his looks. Pleased with his outside, I put some questions to him, which he answered with spirit. I observed that he was of an intriguing disposition, and looking upon him as a subject pat for my purpose, engaged him immediately. I had no cause to repent of my choice; nay, I perceived, in a very little time, that I had made an admirable acquisition. As the duke had permitted me to speak to him in favor of people whom I wanted to serve, (and I was resolved not to neglect this permission,) I had occason for a jackall to discover the game; that is, an industrious pleasant fellow, proper to find out and allure those who had favors to ask of the prime minister. This office was quite the master-piece of Scipio, (such was my lackey's name,) who had been in the service of Donna Anna de Guevera, nurse to the Prince of Spain, where he had exercised that talent to some purpose.

As soon as he understood my credit, and that I

should be glad to use it to the best advantage, he went to work, and that very day said to me, "Signior, I have made a pretty good discovery: a young gentleman of Granada, called Don Roger de Rada, is come to Madrid on an affair of honor, which obliges him to solicit the Duke of Lerma's protection, and he is willing to pay well for the favor he shall obtain. I have already spoke with him, and found him desirous of applying to Don Rodrigo de Calderona, whose power he had heard greatly extolled; but I have changed his intention, by assuring him that Calderona sells his good offices at an extravagant rate; whereas you content yourself with a moderate gratification for yours, and that you would even employ them gratis, were you in a situation that permitted you to follow your generous and disinterested inclination: in short, I spoke to him in such a manner, as that you will see the gentleman at your levee to-morrow morning." "How!" said I, "Mr. Scipio, you have already done a greal deal of work. I perceive that you are no novice in matters of intrigue; and am surprised that you have not made your fortune." "That ought not to surprise you," he replied; "I love to make money circulate, and never hoard up what I can get."

Don Roger de Rada actually came to my lodgings, and I received him with politeness mixed with pride. "Signior Cavalier," said I, "before I engage to serve you, I must know the affair of honor that brings you to court; for it may be of

such a nature, that I dare not speak to the prime minister in your behalf: make, therefore, if you please, a faithful report of it, and be assured that I will enter warmly into your interests, provided a man of honor may espouse them." "With all my heart," replied the young Granadine; "I will sincerely recount my story." At the same time he related it as follows.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S TANJORE

CHAP. VIII.

THE HISTORY OF DON ROGER DE RADA.

Don Anastasio de Rada, a Granadine gentleman, lived happily in the town of Antequera with Donna Estephania his wife, who, together with unblemished virtue, possessed a gentle disposition, and a great share of beauty. If she had a tender affection for her husband, he was also distractedly fond of her; and being naturally addicted to jealousy, (though he had not the least cause to suspect her fidelity,) was not without disquiet. He was afraid that some secret enemy of his repose made attempts upon his honour: he distrusted all his friends, except Don Huberto de Hordales, who had free access to his house in quality of Estephania's cousin, and who, indeed, was the only man he ought to have suspected.

Don Huberto actually fell in love with his kinswoman, and had presumption enough to declare his passion, without regard to ties of blood, or the particular friendship subsisting between him and Anastasio. The lady being a woman of discretion instead of making a discovery which might have been attended with melancholy consequences, reprimanded her relation with gentleness; represented to him how much he was to blame, in attempting to seduce her, and dishonour her husband; and

told him very seriously, that he must not flatter himself with the hope of success.

This moderation served only to inflame the cavalier the more; and imagining that he must push things to extremity with a woman of her character, he began to behave very disrespectfully to her, and one day had the audacity to press her to satisfy his desire. She repulsed him with an air of severity, and threatened to make Don Anastasio punish his rashness. The gallant, terrified at this menace, promised to speak no more of his passion; and on the faith of that promise, Estephania pardoned what was past.

Don Huberto, who was naturally a very wicked man, could not behold his love so ill repaid, without conceiving a base desire of being revenged. He knew the jealous temper of Don Anastasio to be susceptible of any impression which he had a mind to give; and he needed no more than this intelligence to form the blackest design that ever entered into the heart of a villain. One evening, while he and this weak husband were walking together by themselves, he said to him with a melancholy air, "My dear friend, I can no longer live without revealing to you a secret, which I would have kept for ever from your knowledge, were not your honor dearer to you than your repose; but your delicacy and mine, in point of injuries, permits me not to conceal what passes at your house. Prepare to hear a piece of news, which will give

you as much sorrow as surprize, for I must touch you in the tenderest part."

"I understand you," said Don Anastasio, already discomposed; "your cousin is unfaithful." "I no longer own her for my cousin," replied Huberto, with an air of indignation: "I renounce her, for she is unworthy of such a husband." "'Tis too much to make me languish in this manner," cried Don Anastasio: "speak; what has Estephania done?" "She has betrayed you," answered Huberto: "you have a rival, whom she entertains in private: but I know not his name; for the adulterer, by the favour of a dark night, concealed his person from those who observed his retreat. All I know is, that you are deceived: that I am certain of. The concern which I ought to have in this affair but too well verifies my report. Since I declare myself against Estephania, I must be well convinced of her infidelity.

"It is in vain," added he, observing that this discourse had the desired effect, "it is in vain for me to tell you more. I perceive that you do not deserve the ingratitude with which your love is repaid; and that you meditate just vengeance on the guilty. I will not oppose your design. Never examine who the victim is that you intend to strike; but show to the whole city, that there is nothing which you cannot sacrifice to your honor."

The traitor thus animated a too credulous hus-

band against an innocent wife; and painted, in such lively colours, the infamy with which he would be covered, if he should leave the injury unpunished, that he grew mad with revenge. Don Anastasio having lost his judgment, seemed actuated by the Furies, and went home with a resolution to stab his unhappy wife, who was just going to bed when he came in. He constrained himself at first, and waited until the servants were withdrawn; then, unrestricted by the fear of heaven's wrath, by the dishonor he was going to reflect upon his family, and even by the natural pity which he ought to have felt for an infant which his wife had already carried six months in her womb, he approached the victim, saying, in a furious tone, "Thou must die, wretch! Thou hast but a moment to live, and that my generosity allows thee, to spend in a prayer to heaven, to pardon the outrage thou hast committed against me: for I would not have thee lose thy soul as thou hast lost thy honor." So saying, he unsheathed his poniard. His action and discourse terrified Estephania, who falling at his feet, and clasping her hands, said to him, in the utmost astonishment, "What is the matter, Signior! what cause of discontent have I been so unhappy as to give you? Why would you take away the life of your spouse? If you suspect her of infidelity, indeed you are mistaken."

"No, no!" the jealous husband hastily replied; "I am but too well assured of your falsehood; those who informed me are creditable

persons. Don Huberto—" "Ah, Signior!" said she, interrupting him with precipitation, "you have reason to distrust Don Huberto: he is less your friend than you imagine. If he has said any thing to the prejudice of my virtue, do not believe him." "Peace, infamous woman!" answered Don Anastasio; "by endeavouring to prejudice me against Hordales, you justify, instead of dissipate, my suspicions. You endeavour to render that relation suspected, because he is informed of your misconduct: but that artifice is in vain, and redoubles my desire of punishing your guilt." "My dear husband!" resumed the innocent Estephania, weeping bitterly, "distrust your own blind rage. If you follow its emotions, you will commit an action which it will not be in your power to atone, when once you are convinced of your injustice. In the name of God, quiet your transports: at least, give yourself time to clear up your suspicions, and do justice to a wife who has no crime to reproach herself with."

Any other than Anastasio would have been moved with these words, and still more with the affliction of her who pronounced them: but he, cruel man! far from being melted at her distress, once more bid the lady recommend herself quickly to God, and even lifted up his arm to strike. "Hold, barbarian!" cried she: "if thy love for me is entirely extinguished; if the marks of tenderness, which I have lavished upon thee, are effaced from thy remembrance; if my tears cannot

divert thee from thy execrable design; at least, have some regard to thy own blood. Arm not thy frantic hand against an innocent, who has not yet seen the light: thou canst not be its executioner, without offending heaven and earth. As for my part, I forgive thee my death: but be assured, the blood of the babe will cry for vengeance on the horrible deed."

Howsoever determined Don Anastasio was to pay no attention to what Estephania might say, he could not help being moved by those dreadful images which her last words presented to his thought. Wherefore, as if he had been afraid that his emotion would betray his resentment, he hastened to take advantage of the fury that remained in his heart, and plunging his poniard into the right side of his wife, quitted his house immediately, and fled from Antequera.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate lady was so stunned with the blow which she had received, that she lay some minutes on the floor, without any signs of life. Afterwards, recovering her spirits, she uttered such plaints and lamentations, as brought an old maid-servant into the room. As soon as this good woman saw her mistress in such a piteous condition, she waked the rest of the domestics, and even the neighbours with her cries. The chamber was soon filled with people; surgeons were called; they examined the wound, and had great hopes of her recovery. They were not mistaken in their conjecture; for, in a little time, they cured Este-

phania, who was happily delivered, three months after this cruel adventure, of a son, Signior Gil Blas, whom you now see. I am the fruit of that melancholy pregnancy.

Although scandal seldom spares a woman's virtue, it respected that of my mother; and this bloody scene was looked upon in town as the groundless transport of a jealous husband. My father, it is true, was known to be a violent man, very apt to take umbrage without cause. Hordales concluded that his kinswoman suspected him of having disturbed the mind of Don Anastasio with false stories; and satisfied with being, at least, half revenged, left off visiting her. Not to tire you, Sir, I will not enlarge upon the particulars of my education; but only observe, that my mother's principal care was to have me taught to fence; and I accordingly learned that exercise, a long time, in the most celebrated schools of Granada and Seville. She waited with impatience until I was old enough to measure my sword with that of Don Huberto, before she informed me of the cause she had to complain of him: then, I being in my eighteenth year, she imparted to me the whole story; not without shedding tears in abundance, and appearing affected with the most violent sorrow. What impression must a mother in that condition make on a son, who neither wanted courage nor sentiment? I went instantly, and challenged Hordales to a private place, where, after a pretty obstinate combat, I ran him through

the body in three places, and left him breathless upon the spot.

Don Huberto finding himself mortally wounded, fixed his last looks on me, and said he received the death I had given him as a just punishment for the crime he had committed against the honor of my mother. He confessed, that he had resolved upon her destruction, to be revenged of her scorn; and expired, asking pardon of heaven, Don Anastasio, Estephania, and me. I did not think proper to return, in order to inform my mother of what had happened; I left that to fame; and passing the mountains, repaired to Malaga, where I embarked with the captain of a privateer, just ready to sail on a cruise. He thought I did not look like one who wanted courage, and gladly consented that I should join his volunteers.

We soon found an opportunity of signalizing ourselves. Near the island of Albouran we met a corsair of Mellila, in her return to the coast of Africa, with a Spanish ship richly laden, which she had taken off Carthagena. We vigorously attacked the African, and made ourselves masters of both ships, in which we found fourscore Christians, whom they were carrying as slaves to Barbary. Then, taking advantage of a favorable wind that sprung up for the coast of Granada, we arrived, in a little time, at Punta de Helena.

While we asked the slaves, whom we had delivered, the places of their nativity, I put that question to a man of good mien, who seemed to be

about fifty years of age. He answered, with a sigh, that he was from Antequera. I felt a strange emotion at his reply, without knowing wherefore; and he perceiving it, was remarkably disturbed in his turn. "I am," said I, "your townsman: may I ask the name of your family?" "Alas!" he replied, "you renew my grief, by desiring me to gratify your curiosity. Eighteen years ago I quitted Antequera, where I cannot be remembered without horror. You yourself may, perhaps, have heard of me but too often: my name is Don Anastasio de Rada." "Just heaven!" cried I; "can I believe my senses? What! are you Don Anastasio, my own father, whom I see!" "What is that you say, young man!" cried he, in his turn, looking at me with surprise; "is it possible that you are the unhappy infant which was in its mother's womb when I sacrificed her to my fury?" "Yes, my father," said I, "I am he the virtuous Estephania brought into the world three months after that fatal night on which you left her weltering in her blood."

Don Anastasio, before I had finished these words, fell upon my neck, clasped me in his arms, and for a whole quarter of an hour, we did nothing but mingle our sighs and tears. After having yielded to those tender emotions that such a meeting could not fail to raise, my father lifted up his eyes, and thanked heaven for having preserved the life of Estephania. But a moment after, as if he had been afraid of giving thanks unseasonably, he

asked in what manner the innocence of his wife had been proved? "Signior," said I, "nobody but you ever doubted it: her conduct was always irreproachable. I will disabuse you: you must know that you were imposed upon by Don Huberto." I then recounted the whole of that glutton's perfidy, the vengeance I had taken, and the confession he made at his death. My father was not so much pleased at the recovery of his freedom, as with the news I told. In the excess of his joy, he began to embrace me again with tenderness and transport; and could not help expressing his satisfaction with regard to my conduct. "Come, my son," said he, "let us hasten to Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife whom I have so unworthily treated. Since you have made me acquainted with my own injustice, my heart is torn with remorse!"

I was too eager to bring together persons who were so dear to me, to retard the happy moment. I quitted the privateer, and, with my share of the prize we had taken, bought two mules at Adra, my father being unwilling to expose himself again to the dangers of the sea. He had leisure enough on the road to relate his adventures, which I heard with as greedy attention as that which the prince of Ithaca paid to those of the king his father. In short, after having travelled several days, we gained the foot of a mountain, in the neighbourhood of Antequera, where we halted; and resolving to go home privately, did not enter the town till midnight.

I leave you to guess the surprise of my mother, at the return of a husband whom she thought for ever lost: and the miraculous manner (if I may be allowed the expression) in which he was restored, became another cause for her astonishment. He asked pardon for his barbarity with such genuine marks of repentance, that she could not help being affected with them; and, instead of regarding him as an assassin, looked upon him as a man to whom heaven had subjected her will: so sacred is the name of husband to a virtuous woman!

Estephania had been so anxious on my account, that she was overjoyed at my return. But her pleasure was not without alloy. The sister of Horatio had begun a criminal process against the murderer of her brother, and caused me to be searched for every where in such a manner, that my mother, knowing how insecure I was at home, suffered great uneasiness, which obliged me to set out that very night for court; where I come, Signior, to solicit my pardon, which I hope to obtain, since you design to speak to the prime minister in my behalf, and to support me with your whole credit.

The valiant son of Don Anastasio here finished his narration; upon which I said to him, with an air of importance, "Enough, Signior Don Roger; the case seems pardonable. I undertake to communicate your affair to his excellency, and I will venture to promise you his protection." The Granadine, upon this assurance, launched out into a world of thanks, which would only have entered

at one ear, and gone out at the other, had he not assured me, that whatever service I should do him, would be close followed by his acknowledgment. As soon as he touched on that string, I put myself in motion, and that very day recounted his story to the duke, who, having permitted me to introduce the cavalier, said to him, "Don Roger, I am informed of the affair that brought you to court; Santillane has told me every circumstance; make yourself easy; you have done nothing that is not excusable; and it is particularly to those gentlemen who revenge their injured honor, that his majesty loves to show favor. For the sake of form, you must go to prison; but be assured, you shall not continue in it long. Your friend Santillane will take care of the rest, and soon procure your enlargement."

Don Roger made a profound bow to the minister, on whose word he surrendered himself. His pardon, by my care, was expedited in a very little time; for, in less than ten days, I sent this new Telemachus home to his Ulysses and Penelope; whereas, had he been without a protector, he would not, perhaps, have been quit for a whole year's imprisonment. I touched no more than an hundred pistoles for my good offices; so that it was not a great catch. But I was not yet a Calderona, to despise small matters.

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